

NEWSLETTER

CONSTRUCTION INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATES

Wednesday, March 18 - 19, 2025

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Centre Fast-Tracks Eight Key Infra Projects Under PM GatiShakti

"Joining the Hands that Believe in Building Sustainably # Platform for Sustainable Infra"

PTI,
March 19, 2025

The Network Planning Group (NPG), in its 89th meeting, reviewed eight major infrastructure projects in the road, railway, and metro sectors to enhance multimodal connectivity and logistics efficiency under the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry announced on Friday that these projects aim to improve transport networks, reduce travel time, and drive economic growth across various regions.

In the road sector, four projects were evaluated. The first involves upgrading the 136.11 km Darugiri-Dalu stretch of NH-62 (New NH-217) in Meghalaya to a two-lane highway, improving connectivity across East, South, and West Garo Hills and boosting cross-border trade. The second project is India's first road tunnel under a major river, a four-lane tunnel beneath the Brahmaputra, connecting Gohpur and Numaligarh. This will cut travel time from 6.5 hours to just 30 minutes and reduce the journey distance from 240 km to 34 km, enhancing connectivity to Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur.

The third project focuses on widening the Kaliabor-Numaligarh highway in Assam to four lanes, spanning 85.67 km and incorporating wildlife-friendly infrastructure near Kaziranga National Park. The fourth initiative is a two-lane highway from Mayjilar to Jaisalmer, including a bypass for Jaisalmer, covering 138.177 km. This project is expected to improve regional connectivity, boost tourism, support defence movement, and enhance road safety in Rajasthan.

In the railway sector, three projects were assessed. The first involves expanding the third and fourth rail lines on the 32.46 km Badlapur-Karjat route to ease congestion on the busy Mumbai-Pune-Solapur-Wadi-Chennai corridor. The second project will add a fourth rail line between Nergundi and Cuttack in Odisha, along with a flyover at Nergundi, to streamline freight transport for Paradip Port and Talcher coalfields. The third project will build a 74.09 km double rail line from Haridaspur to Paradip, boosting coal transportation and industrial logistics in Odisha's Angul-Jharsuguda region.

The Rajkot Metro Rail Project was also reviewed. Spanning 41.11 km, this greenfield initiative in Gujarat aims to decongest urban traffic and integrate seamlessly with regional rail, bus, and public transport networks.

These fast-tracked projects are set to enhance connectivity, economic development, and logistical efficiency across key regions, aligning with India's long-term infrastructure vision.

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Terms for highway TOT contracts to be tweaked

Reuters,
March 18, 2025

The government plans to review the Toll Operate Transfer (TOT) contract model to enhance viability and boost investor interest.

The government is planning to undertake another review of the model contract for Toll Operate Transfer (TOT) mode of monetisation of highways, to make it more viable and boost investor interest.

The revised draft of the concession agreement could be ready in April. The new norms, to be announced after the review, are expected to address concerns of the government too. Currently, s Infrastructure Investment Trust (InVIT) is seen to deliver better returns, compared to ToT model for the government. There have been reports that the government is more in favour of InVIT rather than ToT.

Both the modes of monetisation will be used to meet the aggressive target for highway monetisation in the next National Monetisation Pipeline (NIP). The NIP for next five years will have a target of Rs 10 lakh crore of which Rs 3.5 lakh crore will come from highways.

The last review of the Model Concession Agreement (MCA) used for monetisation of publicly funded operational national highways was done in March 2024. This review reduced the time period between the two reviews of toll collection on monetised highways to five years from seven years.

This change ensures that any variations in toll collection are addressed promptly, and corresponding changes are made to the concession period. It also allows for three reviews instead of two during the validity of concession period for highways monetised under ToT.

It also cut down the degree of variance in toll collections against the projected numbers that will trigger a review of the concession period to 5% from 20% and 30%. Now if the collection is 5% less or more than projected it will lead to change in concession period.

The government will also come out with a revised MCA for highways to be developed through Build Operate Transfer (BoT) mode in April. The aim of MCA revision exercise for BoT is to balance the risk between the the government and the private developers.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) now insists that pre-construction preparations and activities must come to a definitive conclusion before the letter of award is issued.

Revitalising BoT is essential as the government now aims to focus on high-speed corridors for efficient logistics that require massive amounts of capital. The plan is to take the length of high speed corridors to 50,000 km from 4,500 km now.

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Mumbai Coastal Road Project to Open Underpass, Promenade by 2025

CW Team,

March 19, 2025

The Mumbai Coastal Road Project (MCRP) is set to open a 550-meter vehicular underpass (VuP) next month, offering smoother traffic flow for motorists traveling from Dadar and Prabhadevi towards the coastal road.

Additionally, a 7.5 km Marine-Drive-like promenade featuring jogging tracks, seating areas, and green spaces will be ready by May 2025, stretching from Priyadarshini Park to Worli. The promenade, spanning 11 hectares, will include 20 pedestrian underpasses (PuPs) for easy access, enhancing public connectivity and the city's coastal experience.

The 10.58 km coastal road, connecting Marine Drive to the Bandra-Worli Sea Link (BWSL), is now operational, improving traffic movement.

As part of its CSR initiative, Tata Sons Limited is beautifying the median along a 4.35 km stretch from Priyadarshini Park to Worli. Additionally, five firms have shown interest in developing 70 hectares of open space along the coastal road, with an estimated CSR investment of Rs 4 billion (\$48 million).

“We are currently reviewing these firms, after which a final decision will be made,” stated a senior civic official.

The 20-meter-wide promenade along the coastline will offer breathtaking views of the Arabian Sea. Officials confirmed that the underpasses are nearing completion and will open alongside the landscaping work.

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Delhi Transfers Rohtak Road Redevelopment to NHAI for Faster Execution

CW Team,

March 18, 2025

The Delhi government has handed over the redevelopment of Rohtak Road to the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), shifting the project from the Public Works Department (PWD) to ensure faster completion. The decision follows numerous complaints from residents about the deteriorated condition of the road, which serves as a key link between Outer North Delhi and Haryana.

Delhi PWD Minister Parvesh Verma, after inspecting the stretch, stated that waterlogging caused by sewer overflow has severely damaged the road, leading to large potholes and traffic disruptions. The 18-kilometer stretch from Peeragarhi Chowk to Tikri Border will undergo a Rs 1.15 billion redevelopment, including improved drainage, with a targeted completion timeline of 14 months.

Given that the project passes through areas with Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL) pipelines and three Delhi Metro stations, necessary permissions will be obtained to prevent delays. Verma urged officials to expedite approvals, stressing that delays lead to cost escalations. He also criticised previous administrations for neglecting the road’s maintenance, leading to its current state.

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AMC Begins Construction of Gujarat’s First Rubber-Cum-Barrage Bridge

Ahmedabad Mirror,

March 19, 2025

The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) has commenced work on Gujarat’s first rubber-cum-barrage bridge over the Sabarmati River. The 1-kilometer, six-lane bridge, being built at an estimated cost of 300 crore, aims to enhance connectivity between eastern and western Ahmedabad, providing direct access from Sabarmati to the airport via Sadar Bazaar.

Standing Committee Chairman Devang Dani announced that 10,000 square meters of land from Torrent Power near Rathi Apartment has been acquired for constructing the approach road. This road will also link to the Sabarmati Riverfront.

Part of the Sabarmati Riverfront Project Phase-2, the bridge will stretch 1,047 meters, connecting Acher on the west bank to Camp Sadar Bazar on the east bank. Approach bridges on both sides will integrate it with the riverfront road.

The project is expected to ease traffic congestion and improve airport access for residents of North Gujarat, Sabarmati, Chandkheda, Hansol, Motera, and nearby areas. Once completed, commuters will no longer need to travel via Shahibaug Dafnala to reach the airport. A 2 to 2.5-meter-wide pedestrian footpath will also be constructed beneath the bridge to enhance connectivity along the Sabarmati Riverfront.

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Kochi-Munnar Travel Eased with Highway Upgrades

New Indian Express,
March 18, 2025

The completion of the Kochi-Munnar NH-85 upgrade is set to enhance connectivity and boost tourism in the region. As part of the project, 45 culverts along the corridor have been reconstructed at a cost of Rs 500 billion. Additionally, plans are underway for a four-lane Greenfield National Highway spanning 151 km along the Kochi-Munnar-Theni corridor, further improving travel infrastructure.

Meanwhile, the long-delayed culvert construction near Statue Junction on NH-85 is nearing completion. The project, which began over three years ago, had caused frequent traffic congestion at the entrance to the Tripunithura Mini Bypass Junction, triggering protests from commuters. The issue stemmed from a pothole that gradually expanded into a large crater due to the erosion of an old canal built 60 years ago for Cochin Refinery. The weakened ground led to road collapses and multiple accidents, particularly involving two-wheelers.

The Greater Cochin Development Authority (GCDA) resumed work on the 21-meter-long culvert nearly ten months ago, dividing it into three phases of seven meters each. With construction now in its final stages, the completion of the project is expected to ease traffic flow and improve road safety along the crucial NH-85 corridor.

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EPG Raises Environmental Concerns Over Srinagar-Pahalgam Road Project

Kashmir life,
March 19, 2025

The Environmental Policy Group (EPG) has voiced strong opposition to the proposed Srinagar-Pahalgam road via Khrew, warning of severe ecological damage and biodiversity loss. The project, which involves felling 845 trees and acquiring 108 kanals of forest land, has raised alarms among environmentalists who argue that the environmental costs far outweigh the benefits, including a 30-kilometre reduction in travel distance.

With two existing roads already linking Srinagar and Pahalgam, the EPG questions the necessity of a third route. The group also warns that tunneling alternatives could weaken rock formations, disrupt water sources, and pose significant risks in the seismically active Zone 5. Citing past environmental disasters in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, the EPG urges authorities to reconsider before proceeding.

The proposed road is expected to cut through the Notified Wildlife Sanctuary at Tral, threatening local flora, fauna, and natural water cycles. While the project is being promoted as a boost for tourism and employment, the EPG stresses that Kashmir's natural beauty is its greatest asset and must be preserved for sustainable development.

The group has called for an immediate halt to the project until a comprehensive environmental impact assessment is conducted. Additionally, the project requires Supreme Court clearance before any construction can begin.

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