



# राजमार्ग RAJMAARG

NHAI BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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## Inner Lanes



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## BUILDING SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL HIGHWAYS

Environmental sustainability is an essential part of infrastructure development. As India expands its National Highway network, the integration of green practices such as plantation, conservation and beautification are playing a vital role in creating eco-friendly transport corridors. Green initiatives along National Highways not only enhance aesthetics but also improve air quality, reduce soil erosion and contribute to long-term ecological balance.

The Green Highways (Plantation, Transplantation, Beautification and Maintenance) Policy, 2015

launched by the Government of India serves as a guiding framework for developing sustainable National Highway network. The policy encourages large-scale plantation and maintenance efforts along National Highways, fostering a cleaner and greener environment.

NHAI has undertaken several impactful initiatives to transform National Highways stretches into green corridors. After the Implementation of Green Highways Policy, 2015 NHAI has planted over 4.78 crore trees along various National Highway stretches and has

successfully transplanted around 70,000 trees. In 2024–2025, NHAI planted over 67 Lakh trees against an annual target of planting 60 lakh trees.

Strengthening its commitment further and commemorating the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0' initiative, NHAI has set a target of 52 lakh trees to be planted along the National Highways in 2025. The vision is to saturate plantations along the National Highways collectively by involving various stakeholders to create a green and sustainable National Highway network.



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"Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0" initiative, encouraging citizens to plant a tree to promote environmental conservation. The initiative also raises awareness about the importance of trees in maintaining ecological balance and combating climate change.

As the trees grow, they serve as a living testament to the love and nurturing spirit of mothers, fostering a sense of responsibility and care for the environment. As part of the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0' initiative, a nationwide tree plantation drive was organised across various NHAI field offices to mark World Environment Day 2025. Adding momentum to the initiative, NHAI Chairman Shri Santosh Kumar Yadav planted trees at Daat Kali Tunnel on the Uttar Pradesh/Uttarakhand border section of the Delhi-Dehradun Economic Corridor and Shri Vishal Chauhan, Member (Administration), participated in the drive by planting trees at Bijwasan area near the Dwarka Expressway.



## Tree Plantation Drive

Commemorating Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0, a tree plantation drive was organised along the Delhi-Dehradun Economic Corridor at Katha Toll Plaza in Baghpat District, Uttar Pradesh.

Shri V. Umashankar, Secretary, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, planted the first sapling of the drive at Katha Toll Plaza on the Delhi-Dehradun

Economic Corridor in Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh, marking commencement of the initiative.

The Delhi-Dehradun Corridor is a key infrastructure project that will significantly boost connectivity between Delhi and Uttarakhand, now also stands as a symbol of green progress. This integrated approach where environmental conservation goes hand-in-hand

with infrastructure advancement is positioning the Delhi-Dehradun Economic Corridor as a benchmark for green National Highway development in India.

Through sustained efforts like these, NHAI continues to reaffirm its commitment to building a future-ready, environmentally responsible National Highway network across the country.



## Hon'ble Prime Minister Laid Foundation Stone and Inaugurated Various NH Projects in Rajasthan

The Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visited Bikaner in Rajasthan on 22nd May 2025 and laid the foundation stone as well as inaugurated various National Highway projects in the state. These projects included laying of Foundation Stone for 134 km long two lane with paved shoulder of Myajlar-Jaisalmer & Sundra-Myajlar-Ambasingh ki Dhani Road, section of NH-11 and NH-70 in Rajasthan. Also Hon'ble PM

inaugurated the 191 km long two lane with paved shoulder of Tanot-Ramgarh-Jaisalmer and Mokal-Sarkaritala section of NH-68 and NH-968; 102 km long two-laning with paved shoulder of Sriganganagar-Raisinghnagar section of NH-911; the 25 km long six-laning of access-controlled Deogarh-Rajasthan/Gujarat border section of NH-754K in Rajasthan. These projects will significantly bolster national security by improving access to the

international border for defence forces. They will also enhance regional connectivity across towns and strengthen inter-state connectivity between Punjab and Rajasthan, facilitating the smoother transport of agricultural produce for farmers. Additionally, the initiatives are set to reduce travel time, boost local trade, promote tourism, and drive economic development in the remote regions of Rajasthan.



## Hon'ble Prime Minister Laid Foundation Stone and Inaugurated Various NH Projects in Bihar

The Hon'ble Prime Minister visited Bikramganj in Bihar on 30th May 2025 and laid the foundation stone as well as inaugurated various National Highway projects in the state.

These projects included laying the foundation stone for the six-laning of 14.5 km long Ramnagar-Kacchi Dargah section of NH-119D; construction of Ganga Bridge between Buxar and Bharauli on NH-922; four-laning of 120 km long Patna-Arrah-Sasaram section of NH-119A; six-laning of Varanasi-Ranchi-Kolkata section (Pkg 2 & 3 and 6 & 7) of NH-319B in Bihar. Hon'ble Prime Minister also inaugurated the fourlaning of 127.2 km long Patna-Gaya-Dobhi section of NH-22 and four laning of 2.75 km long elevated highway and at grade improvements at Gopalganj Town on NH-27 in Bihar.

These projects will significantly enhance connectivity, boost the regional economy, and ease congestion in the region. By strengthening connectivity between Patna, Jehanabad, and Gaya to Dobhi on NH-2, they establish a vital feeder corridor linking Bihar with Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal.

The improved infrastructure will offer enhanced connectivity for both passenger and freight traffic, while bypassing congested towns, reducing travel time and easing pressure on other highways. These initiatives also enhance linkages between Bihar's key economic zones, industrial hubs, and agricultural belts with neighbouring states, helping to decongest the Grand Trunk Road (NH-2) and other major routes by diverting heavy vehicular traffic. Furthermore, they improve connectivity for remote regions and facilitate better tourist access to major cultural and religious destinations such as Varanasi, Deoghar, and Kolkata.



## Shri Nitin Gadkari Laid Foundation Stone and Dedicated to the Nation Various NH Projects in Telangana

On 5th May 2025, Hon'ble Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Shri Nitin Gadkari, laid the foundation stone for several National Highway projects in the state of Telangana.

These projects included 4 Underpasses, Service Roads & FOB on Nagpur-Hyderabad Section of NH-44; Widening to 4-lane of Armoor Jagtial-Mancherial Section of NH-63 at Jagtial Town limit; 2-lane with paved shoulder of Gowrelly-Valigonda section of NH-930P; Flyover, 12 Underpasses and Service roads on Hyderabad-Vijayawada section of NH-65; Flyover and 3

Underpasses on Hyderabad-Yadgiri section of NH-163; Underpass & Service Roads on Nagpur-Hyderabad section of NH-44.

Shri Gadkari also dedicated to the nation various National Highway projects that included 4-laning of 94.6 km long Mancherial to Telangana-Maharashtra border section of NH-363; 2-lane with paved shoulder of 17.7 km long Nirmal-Khanapur section of NH-61; Underpass on Nagpur-Hyderabad section of NH-44; Service Roads & Junction improvements on Nagpur-Hyderabad section of NH-44; 6-laning

of 10 km long Aramgarh-Shamshabad section of NH-44; 4-lane flyover at Amberpet X-Road on NH-202; 6-lane flyover near BHEL Junction on Pune-Hyderabad Section of NH-65; 5-Underpasses on Nagpur-Hyderabad section of NH-44; Underpass on Hyderabad-Warangal Section of NH-163.

These projects will provide seamless, safer and faster inter-state travel between Maharashtra, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh with improved connectivity to industrial hubs and religious sites.



## Shri Nitin Gadkari Laid Foundation Stone and Dedicated to the Nation Various NH Projects in Jharkhand

On 3rd July 2025, Hon'ble Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Shri Nitin Gadkari visited Garhwa and laid the foundation stone for the 32.3 km long Chhattisgarh/Jharkhand Border to Gumla section of Raipur-Dhanbad Economic Corridor in Jharkhand.

Hon'ble Minister also inaugurated the 22.7 km long four-laning of Sankha-Khajuri section on NH-75 in Jharkhand. These projects will enhance interstate connectivity between Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh via Ranchi-Garhwa corridor, reduce travel time and facilitate small business growth. Also, these projects will boost regional trade, support stone quarry industries in Chotanagpur, promote inclusive

development and improve road safety. The Hon'ble Minister also visited Ranchi on 3rd July 2025. During the visit, Shri Gadkari laid the foundation stone for multiple National Highways projects including construction of Multiple High-Level Bridges on NH-143 in Simdega district; widening to two-lane with paved shoulder Murgatal-Manpur section of NH-218; construction of High-level Bridge over Damodar River beside existing Birsa Bridge & ROB at Railway Level Crossing in Bhowra on NH-218.

Hon'ble Minister also dedicated to the nation various NH projects in Ranchi including widening/strengthening of 8.9 km long road in Giridih town of NH-114A; widening to two-

lane with paved shoulder 18 km long Godda-Sunderpahari section of NH-333A; widening to two-lane with paved shoulder 14.8 km long Barahati-Tulsipur section of NH-133; 4.18 km long Elevated Corridor in Ranchi City on NH-75; 27.5 km long Barhi-Koderma Section of NH-31; four-laning of 63.1 km long Palma-Gumla section on NH-23. These projects will enhance interstate and regional connectivity across Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh. Also, these will ease traffic congestion, improve logistics efficiency and road safety, ease transportation and support economic activity in coal-rich regions like Jharia and Dhanbad.



## Shri Nitin Gadkari Laid Foundation Stone and Dedicated to the Nation Various NH Projects in Maharashtra

On 7th July 2025, Hon'ble Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Shri Nitin Gadkari visited Bhandara and dedicated to the nation various National Highway projects including the six-lane Bhandara Bypass on NH-53 in Maharashtra and the six-lane flyover (Mouda Y-Junction) on Nagpur-Wainganga Bridge. These projects will eliminate critical

blind spots in Paldi and Bhilewada villages, enhance road safety on NH-53, and improve passenger and freight connectivity between Nagpur, Raipur, and Chhattisgarh. Also, these will ease congestion over the Wainganga River and provide better access to remote agricultural regions. Hon'ble Minister also laid the foundation stone for various National Highways projects in

Bhandara. These projects included Vehicular Overpass at Manegaon Village on NH-53; rehabilitation & upgradation of Bapera to Tumsar section on NH-543K; strengthening work of Khapa to Bhandara section on NH-543K. These projects will enhance safety for local residents and farm vehicles, eliminate traffic conflict points between local and highway users.



## Shri Harsh Malhotra Laid Foundation Stone of Various NH Projects in Kushinagar, Uttar Pradesh

On 20th May 2025, Shri Harsh Malhotra, Hon'ble Minister of State for Road, Transport & Highways and Corporate Affairs laid the foundation stones of five vehicular underpasses at Union Chowk, Fazilnagar, Salemgarh and Patheria

on NH-27 in Kushinagar, Uttar Pradesh. The vehicular underpasses have been envisioned as an important step towards decongestion and reducing road casualties. With a combined length of 5.4 km, the projects will be developed at an estimated total cost of Rs 111 crores.

These projects will enhance road safety and significantly contribute to propel social and economic growth of the region. Further, these underpasses will solve the problem of traffic congestion in the city.



## Tree Plantation Drive along Faridabad-Noida International Airport Corridor

As part of the ongoing commitment to environmental sustainability, NHAI organised a tree plantation drive along the Faridabad-Noida International Airport Corridor on 8th July 2025. Under the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0' campaign, around 17,000 trees were planted near the Yamuna Expressway Interchange in Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh.

The drive witnessed the presence of Shri Nitin Gadkari, Hon'ble Minister for Road Transport and Highways along with Shri Ajay Tamta, Hon'ble Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways; Shri Harsh Malhotra, Hon'ble Minister of

State for Road Transport and Highways and Corporate Affairs, NHAI Chairman Shri Santosh Kumar Yadav and senior officials from MoRTH, NHAI and local administration. School children also enthusiastically participated, reinforcing the message of environmental stewardship at the grassroots level.

Further strengthening the commitment, Shri Nitin Gadkari also unveiled NHAI's Sustainability Report (2023-2024), 'NHAI'S Contribution to India's Sustainable Infrastructure, Circular Economy and Mission LiFE'. This is the 2nd Sustainability Report of NHAI, which reiterates the continued significance

of an environmental, social and governance (ESG) to the operations and long-term vision. The report attempts to holistically showcase the inter-connectedness of governance structure, NHAI stakeholders as well as the commitment to environmental and social performance.

The Faridabad-Noida International Airport Corridor is not only set to enhance regional connectivity but is also emerging as a model for sustainable infrastructure. With its green corridor approach, NHAI continues to set new benchmarks in creating environmentally responsible national highways across the country.





Santosh Kumar Yadav, IAS  
Chairman, NHAI

Dear Friends,

Development of National Highway infrastructure is important for the socio-economic development of the country, but at the same time it is imperative for the development to be sustainable. NHAI has been actively working towards mitigating the impact of National Highway development on the environment by building green highways.

Realising the vision of maximising plantations along the National Highways, in 2024 NHAI exceeded the annual target of planting 60 lakh trees and planted around 67 lakh trees across the country. In 2025, under the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0' initiative, various plantation drives have been organised by NHAI field offices and have set a target of planting 52 lakh trees under this initiative.

As you are aware, NHAI recently released its first-ever Asset Monetization Strategy for the Road Sector. The strategy presents a structured framework that provides a robust blueprint to mobilize capital through Toll-Operate-Transfer (ToT), Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT), and securitization models. The unique approach that NHAI has adopted towards asset monetization not only ensures financial sustainability but also opens opportunities for the private sector, leverage advanced technologies, enhance quality and longevity of our road assets. The successful implementation of this strategy will provide NHAI with a steady stream of financing, reducing our reliance on traditional funding sources.

Also, during the past couple of months we have taken proactive steps to mitigate the challenges posted by Monsoon season. We recently held a meeting with senior officials of Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) to strengthen inter-agency coordination for effectively addressing waterlogging issues along National Highways in Gurugram.

Lastly, as we move ahead to build the National Highway infrastructure for our great nation, I would like to reiterate that we are focused on building an ecologically sustainable framework. With this objective, I am sure that together with our stakeholders we will significantly contribute towards protecting the environment and realize the vision of saturating National Highways with green cover.

Best Wishes,  
Santosh Kumar Yadav

## Secretary MoRTH Reviews Progress of Vijayawada Bypass Project

On 5th May 2025, Shri V. Umashankar, Secretary, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), along with NHA Chairman Shri Santosh Kumar

Yadav and other senior NHA officials, visited the Vijayawada Bypass to review the overall progress of the National Highway project. During the visit, Secretary MoRTH and NHA

Chairman inspected stretches of the bypass and were updated by the officials about the implementation of the project. Here are some glimpses of the visit:



## NHA Chairman Reviews Progress of NH Projects in Kerala

On 1st June 2025, Shri Santosh Kumar Yadav, Chairman, NHA, visited Kerala to review the progress of various National Highway projects in the state. During his visit, the Chairman inspected key stretches in Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam districts, with a strong focus on structurally sensitive zones and areas prone to drainage and water-related challenges. The inspection also covered critical locations such as Enchakkal, Kazhakuttom,

Chembakamangalam, Kottayam and Mevaram. These sites include vertical high-cut sections and require immediate evaluation of stability and water flow management. The Chairman was accompanied by technical experts from concessionaires, Independent Engineers, NHA Regional Officer and Project Director, Thiruvananthapuram. To further assess the state's National Highway development, a review meeting was

scheduled with NHA Project Directors, concessionaires, consultants, and contractors. Discussion centred around expediting timelines, improving construction quality, strengthening monitoring systems, and reducing inconvenience to the public. During his visit, Shri Yadav also met the Chief Secretary of Kerala to address ongoing challenges, boost coordination among agencies, and plan strategic steps for smoother project delivery.



## NHAI Unveils First-Ever Asset Monetization Strategy to Boost Road Sector Financing

In a landmark move to unlock the true value of operational National Highway assets and enhance Public Private Partnership (PPP) in infrastructure development, NHAI released its first-ever Asset Monetization Strategy for the Road Sector. The strategy presents a structured framework that provides a robust blueprint to mobilize capital through Toll-Operate-Transfer (ToT), Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT),

and securitization models. These instruments have helped NHAI raise over ₹1.4 lakh crore across more than 6,100 km of National Highways under the National Monetization Pipeline. The strategy is anchored on three core pillars that includes Value Maximization of Government Road assets, Transparency of Processes and Dissemination of Investor-relevant information, and Market Development

through deepening the investor base as well as promoting stakeholder engagement. The strategy aligns with the Government of India's Asset Monetization Plan (2025–30), marking a critical shift towards sustainable and market-driven infrastructure financing. As one of the early adopters of alternative funding mechanisms, NHAI's efforts are pivotal in realizing the potential of India's extensive NH network.



## Strengthening Coordination on Waterlogging Solutions and Highway Progress in Gurugram

On 18th June 2025, NHAI Chairman Shri Santosh Kumar Yadav held a meeting with Shri Shyamal Misra, CEO, Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA), along with senior GMDA officials, to strengthen inter-agency coordination for effectively addressing waterlogging issues along National Highways in Gurugram. The discussion focused on establishing

streamlined mechanisms for managing monsoon-related challenges and improving overall drainage infrastructure around National Highway stretches in the region. Emphasis was laid on proactive planning and joint execution strategies to ensure road safety, minimize traffic disruptions and improve commuter experience during the rainy season.

In addition to waterlogging mitigation, the meeting also included a detailed review of the progress of ongoing National Highway works in Gurugram, Haryana. The officials assessed key project timelines, identified areas requiring intervention, and reaffirmed their commitment to timely and efficient execution of infrastructure work.



## NHAI's Workshop Charts the Future of the FASTag Ecosystem

To explore innovative applications of the FASTag system, a workshop with industry experts was organised on 25th June 2025 in New Delhi by Indian Highways and Management Company Limited (IHMCL), a company promoted by NHAI. The objective of the workshop was to gather insights from leading fintech players on various aspects, including regulatory compliance, grievance redressal, security, and non-toll applications of FASTag, to support its next phase of growth.

Shri Nitin Gadkari, Hon'ble Minister for Road Transport and Highways; Shri Ajay Tamta, Hon'ble Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways; Shri V. Umashankar, Secretary, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways; Shri M. Nagaraju, Secretary, Department of Financial Services; Shri P Vasudevan, ED, RBI; Shri Santosh Kumar Yadav, Chairman, NHAI, Senior officials from MoRTH, NHAI, IHMCL and representatives of FinTech companies were present on the occasion.

Speaking at the workshop, Hon'ble Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Shri Nitin Gadkari said, "The FASTag ecosystem has immense potential, not just for tolling, but as a foundation for seamless digital travel experiences across the country. Through collaboration with fintechs and other stakeholders, we aim to expand the utility of FASTag into a robust platform that will enhance user convenience, streamline transport & mobility services, and bring greater efficiency to the sector. The presentations and discussions held at this workshop will pave the way for a digitally empowered National Highway network that will benefit every citizen in the country."

Shri V. Umashankar, Secretary, MORTH, addressed the workshop on FASTag ecosystem and emphasised on 5 key mantras: Cashless, Convenient, Time-Efficient, Fraud-Free & Error-Free as the base for developing a roadmap in the ecosystem. NHAI Chairman Shri Santosh Kumar Yadav reinforced the vision of developing future-ready solutions that will

enhance the FASTag ecosystem, extending its utility beyond toll collection to benefit National Highway users. Shri Vishal Chauhan, Member (Administration), NHAI, highlighted how fintech's technological prowess can transform FASTag into a versatile digital platform beyond tolling. The sessions included various focused groups that presented innovative ideas for the adoption of FASTag to new use cases such as managing FASTag Transactions, FASTag for EV Charging, Parking, Insurance, as a flexible payment tool and other FASTag Innovations. The workshop also aimed at building awareness among the FinTech companies about Multi-Lane Free Flow (MLFF) Tolling to encourage their active participation in this technology-driven transformation of tolling infrastructure.

The workshop concluded with a collective vision to drive FASTag into a future ready, user-centric ecosystem and outlined key aspects that will help in shaping the next phase of growth for FASTag.



## NHAI Hosts Media Tour to Showcase National Highways Developments

To foster greater understanding of India's evolving National Highway infrastructure, NHAI organised a media tour from 24th to 26th June 2025. The three-day tour commenced from the National Media Centre, Delhi, covering key projects including the Dwarka Expressway and the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway.

The tour began with an insightful presentation on Advanced Traffic Management Systems (ATMS) at Dwarka Expressway, followed by a visit to the state-of-the-art Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facility (RVSF) in

Manesar, which promotes sustainable vehicle recycling. Media representatives then experienced commuter-centric amenities at the Wayside Amenity on the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway before reaching Ranthambore, Sawai Madhopur for an overnight stay.

Day two focused on NHAI's commitment to environmental management, highlighting wildlife overpasses, underpasses on Delhi- Mumbai Expressway. The media personnel also planted trees at the Lalsot interchange. During the tour, the media also visited contractor's camp and

under-construction tunnel to experience the construction rigor and engineering excellence in challenging terrains. On the final day, the media group headed back to Delhi.

On their way back, the group explored a Wayside Amenity dedicated to truckers and commercial drivers. The group was also briefed on crucial National Highway safety measures like crash barriers, rainwater harvesting and Variable Message Display boards. The tour concluded with enriching insights into NHAI's future-ready infrastructure.



## NHAI Reviews Preparedness for Upcoming Kawad Yatra

NHAI held an important review meeting via video conferencing on 30th June 2025 to ensure seamless preparations for the upcoming 'Kawad Yatra'. NHAI Chairman, Shri Santosh Kumar Yadav led this initiative. Shri Vishal Chauhan, Member (Administration) NHAI; Principal Secretary, Public Works Department-U.P; Commissioner Saharanpur, Shri Atal Kumar Rai; Commissioner Moradabad, Shri Aunjaneya Kumar Singh; Commissioner Meerut, Dr. Hrishikesh Bhaskar Yashod; District Magistrates, Police officials, PWD officials from the districts

falling on the Kawad route participated in the meeting. Officials from NHAI Field offices in the state of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand also attended the meeting. The discussion focused on addressing challenges like waterlogging, potholes, additional lighting, illegal cuts on highways, and ensuring road safety measures. Chairman, Shri Santosh Kumar Yadav emphasized that the comfort and safety of both pilgrims and regular commuters should be the utmost priority. He urged close coordination with local administrations to deploy patrol vehicles,

ambulances, cranes, and toll plaza staff for traffic management and pilgrim assistance. Reinforcing the safety measures, Shri Vishal Chauhan directed field teams to implement proper barricading at construction zones, set up diversions, signages at the dark spots and ensure clean public conveniences. Emergency contact details were advised to be clearly displayed along the route. The meeting reflected the spirit of inter-agency cooperation, showcasing NHAI's commitment to facilitating a smooth, safe and hassle-free Kawad Yatra for devotees.



## Creating a Resilient National Highway Network

*'Down the memory lane' is a series that revisits the glorious years of making of National Highways Authority of India. This series brings exclusive insights and captures the triumphs, milestones, challenges and experiences of former Chairmen of NHAI, who have steered NHAI to newer heights. Rajmaarg caught up with the former NHAI Chairman, Shri N. N. Sinha and here are the excerpts from the conversation that highlights his tenure with the organisation.*



**Shri N. N. Sinha**  
Former Chairman  
National Highways Authority of India

Getting to head NHAI is one of the few postings that elevate you to a position where what you do makes a substantial impact. I remember my stint as Principal Secretary, PWD in Jharkhand, when we were working with NHAI for some of its projects which included completion of 4 laning of the GT road and similar widening of NH-33 besides other projects.

Our strategy then was to assiduously cultivate NHAI so that it is able to take up these critical projects of the state forming spine of the highway network in the State and thereby improve connectivity in the region and also push up investment and economic growth.

Though we tried to copy some of its features while creating the State's own Highway Authority, I am not sure how well we were able to create that institution. In contrast, NHAI though started in 1995, had grown impressively under the vigorous leadership of the then Minister for Highways Maj Gen Khanduri and its impressive Chairmen, each of whom had brought their own strengths to the organization. As a result, the NHAI had become a very strong institution in a short period of time and became the primary vehicle of highway development in India.

### NHAI – The Model Institution

NHAI became the template for highway development organizations in various states. Jharkhand is not the only example. The highway development in Northeast had stagnated due to its multiple problems for a long time. Although Governments at that time had placed lot of emphasis thereon, but the execution had been tardy. PWDs had been unable to make much headway. Even NHAI struggled to make an impact, as the issues of governance, lack of contracting capacity, law and order bottlenecks, mountainous terrain, etc. had made it a graveyard of projects.

So when, Government of India decided to create a new institution, it instinctively turned to NHAI model, albeit focused on the NE and Hilly States and constituted National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) as a Company. It was believed that such a model would bring a lot of energy into the sector in those regions. NHIDCL itself borrowed much of its organizational form, policies and practices on the pattern of NHAI. I was quite surprised to receive a call from the

Chairman of Jal Nigam UP for helping them learn the NHAI model for improvement in its operations.

### Learning on the Go

I was made the head of NHIDCL in August 2017 on my deputation to GOI. Being part of Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH), we used to participate in its meetings along with those from NHAI.

The financing model of NHAI, which was earlier largely based on the rock-solid support of MoRTH had to be thoroughly revised. It was clear that NHAI had to stand on its own. Therefore, the project selection criterion and process had to be thoroughly revamped. Simultaneously, we had to look into ways of making the financing cheaper.

It is in this context, NHAI had to decide how to choose its projects. Any basket of projects would have different levels of viability, and taken together, the entire bunch should have been viable. Therefore, if one were to start with a clean slate, corporate viability rather than project specific viability would have been the ideal way. But given the situation, it made sense to insist that each new project shall be viable on its own. And those

which the Ministry wanted NHAI to take up should be taken up only if the Ministry or the State Government or any other sponsor agreed to pitch in with necessary support. NHAI Board realized the gravity of the issue and went further to declare that the project be only taken up if the State Govt or other sponsor came forward to sponsor half of the Land Acquisition cost upfront and remaining half to be arranged through any value capture instrument during the remaining life of the project.

The financing puzzle was difficult to crack. The way ahead laid in bringing down the servicing costs. At the same time, one had to procure the necessary volume of funds to keep the road construction activities going and honoring all its commitments. LIC and the State Bank became big financiers to NHAI. NHAI was able to get good rates from the market helped by the lowering of Repo rate by RBI.

SBI also agreed to support NHAI by securitizing the toll receivables. NHAI also pushed more flexibility in TOT as also for the inclusion of InvIT among the financial instruments available to it. NHAI along with the World Bank also initiated a study of financial structuring of its projects so that overall cost of the financing was brought down by accessing bonds

from AAA rated financing institutions and consultations with bankers including the investment bankers, Fund Managers especially from abroad. A rumor in August 2019 caused lot of consternation by mentioning that NHAI would only be the asset management agency rather than asset development agency. It was a long exercise to clarify that in the context of Bharatmala Program, which had a large development agenda, this was not an option. NHAI was the only agency which was in a position to take up the task. A series of news items on contingent liabilities of NHAI also complicated the matters.

It took some time to convince all stakeholders. Finally, the market saw wisdom of our position. This also created a scare among the financial analysts which saw the NHAI collapsing under the burden of its debt. It created such a confusion among various stakeholders and the public which had invested their hard-earned money into the NHAI.

The authority had to depute its Member (Finance) to have a dialogue with them and to convince them that NHAI was on a sound financial footing and was in a position to honor its obligations. Another good thing was that we were able to implement project wise accounting for all projects, which became the basis for all these discussions.

I feel gratified for this systemic development, which would go a long way in bringing discipline in project approval and financing.

## Working with States

Financial viability became a key driver and a factor for dialogues with the State Governments. A peculiar case is of Kerala, where the Coastal Highway (NH-66) was still 2 laned in 576 km. This was in sharp contrast with the National Policy of connecting all the State Capitals with 4 laned roads, however, the cost of land acquisition and various structures like flyovers, etc. for the 4 laning was so high that projects per-se were not viable and in fact for some of the stretches presented negative returns.



A long stalemate ensued. Negotiations brokered by the MoRTH led to the State agreeing for financing 25% of the land acquisition costs, although NHAI was not very satisfied with the outcome. MoRTH also pitched for waiving of the royalty and the GSTs. Similar arguments were raised for development of the Third Ring Road (UER-III in Delhi), where NHAI sought land for monetization for filling the viability gaps thereof.

The waiver of the royalty and GST became the staple for the discussion with the States as also the commencement of tolling of the stretches, which had failed to materialize despite NHAI's persistent efforts. Assam was extremely reluctant to introduce tolling on its NHs. The sanctioning of the new works or repair was made conditional to their agreeing to the same. In this way, for the first time, the way could be paved for tolling in Assam. Similar efforts were made for tolling on Pathankot-Jammu highway.

It was also realized that even before the irreversible process for land acquisition is initiated, there ought to be some scrutiny of the project's viability and the need for land, as it was perceived that the Ministry had allowed overgenerous land requirements for different classes of National Highways.

The norms for the same were revisited, and though it was seen particularly by technical members of the team that this compromise would affect the safety of the road traffic and later its prospects of widening, it was seen as a good via-media. Parallely, a Committee led by Chairman and including the Member (Finance) and the concerned Member Project was made to scrutinize them and also decide upon a reasonable width of ROW. It turned out that the scrutiny by the Committee were quite useful. I felt very happy about setting up this mechanism.

I have been unable to understand the reluctance of States to address some of the key bottlenecks affecting the development of highways in their states. Non-availability of minor minerals, inordinately delayed LA proceedings, tardy utility shifting, excessive demands for compensation,

quirky conditions and delay in forest clearances, slow arbitrations in land acquisition are some of the issues which squarely lie in the domain of the states.

It is a fact that changes in the legislation and regulations, especially those arising out of National Green Tribunal has made the implementation environment somewhat uncertain, however, above mentioned are the areas where the support of the states is required. I was surprised to find that even better administered states like Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu were found tardy in this regard.

We achieved some success in persuading the states to allow desilting of ponds/ tanks/ canals to get earth for road construction. Further, Karnataka amended its minor mineral rules thereby permitting the leases for NH Projects. As these did not prove enough, therefore, we had to take harsh steps of cancellation of the projects in some of them to bring home the fact that the states were the ultimate beneficiaries of these projects and the success of the projects depended upon their cooperation as much as the efforts by NHAI.

One of the strangest issues that we encountered was related to wildlife clearances. On the Highway in Rajaji National Park, a condition of over a km long Elephant underpass was imposed by National Green Tribunal. We argued that such long viaducts would make the project unviable.

Further, even the construction thereof would be very time taking process. Even during that period, the elephant herd movement would be severely affected. We also posited that though the paths taken by herds wouldn't be as narrow as a single lane road, but it can't be km long, and their movement can certainly be somewhat guided. Similar issues were faced in Odisha.

In the projects of NHAI in Odisha, besides elephant underpasses, reptile underpasses were insisted for passage of snakes in the form of Hume-Pipe (HP) culverts in Angul-Sambalpur (29 No.); Singhara-Binjabahal (94 No.); Koida-Rajamunda (50 No.); & Brahmani-Rajamunda (40 No.).

To my knowledge, no Indian forester has mapped the movement of snakes in forests, therefore, such stipulations are merely formulaic, ineffective and costly.

In such cases, NHAI would prefer not to widen the road rather than be locked into such expensive projects without any demonstrated and reasonable benefits. It certainly calls for deeper reflections and dialogues both within the wildlife activists and with broader community of stakeholders.

One another intervention I would like to recall on this occasion. IOC had proposed to lay an oil pipeline passing through the States of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. It needed to cross many NHs and was facing delay in getting clearances from NHAI. I thought this was blocking implementation of an important national project. Therefore, through follow up and VC, most of the pending issues were decided. We did a similar thing for the pending DFCC & RoBs clearances in a spirit of mutual give and take. I feel good about NHAI being proactive in removing bottlenecks for implementation of important investment projects.

There are many areas, in which more work was needed e.g. addressing the more effective management of arbitration cases, better HR management, gaps in allied facilities, e.g. of wayside amenities, highway patrol and ambulance services, fully electronic tolling, better guidance of commuters, safety issues/ traffic management systems particularly on national corridors, putting finances of NHAI on a more robust footing besides bread and butter issues of better management of works, handing over of balance lands, finishing of the long pending works etc. which needed my attention.

Unfortunately, time I had was very short. The Chairman NHAI has a strong public interface with a wide variety of stakeholders. Further, the Ministry was also very active in terms of their engagement with the State Governments and Parliamentarians. During the Parliament Session, practically



the entire day was spent attending to parliamentary matters and parliamentarians. I also continued to hold the charge of NHIDCL, which again was a fulltime job. My colleagues were extremely kind to adapt to this difficult situation, but this also brought lot of synergy between the two organizations. Availability of only 2 Members (Finance & Project) out of sanctioned strength of 6 Members (Admin.-1, Fin.-1, PPP-1, Projects-2 & Tech-1), also affected the functioning in some way or the other.

NHAI has within a short span of time has revolutionized the communication network, and strong economic growth of India is partly attributable to this achievement by bringing down the cost of logistics and setting up a strong ecosystem of National Highway framework. NHAI should be proud of this contribution to national development. I salute visionary efforts of men and women manning NHAI and especially its

leadership and the faith and wholehearted support from the Ministry which made this possible. Next decade will be extremely challenging for the NHAI for the reasons outlined above. It calls for a very brave and strategic steering of NHAI, so that this fine institution can continue to render its yeoman services to the nation on its way of inclusive and sustainable growth. One colleague of mine, when he learnt of my appointment as Chairman of NHAI, stated that during the last quarter of century, efforts of only two institutions have made a very strong impact, visible throughout the length and breadth of nation, namely Election Commission of India and NHAI. Such is the respect that it commands, and I am extremely proud to have led it albeit for a short while. May it continue to flourish.

—(Shri NN Sinha was Chairman NHAI from March 2019 to December 2019))



## Shri V. Umashankar, Secretary MoRTH Visits NHAI HQ

On 31st May 2025, Shri V. Umashankar, Secretary, MoRTH, visited NHAI headquarters in New Delhi. During the

visit, Shri Umashankar held discussions with NHAI Chairman, Shri Santosh Kumar Yadav and other senior officials. The focus was on

addressing key challenges pertaining to various aspects of development and implementation of the National Highway network.



## NHAI Organizes Workshop on RTI Act to Foster Transparency and Informed Governance

On 16th June 2025, NHAI hosted an insightful workshop on the Right to Information Act, 2005 at its headquarters in New Delhi. The session aimed at deepening the understanding of the RTI Act among NHAI officials and

reinforcing the importance of transparency. The workshop not only revisited the key provisions of the RTI Act but also addressed practical challenges faced while handling RTI applications. Through engaging discussions

and real-life case examples, the session encouraged officials to adopt more informed and responsive approaches in dealing with information requests. Here are some glimpses from the session:



## राजभाषा समिति ने एनएचएआई के उत्कृष्ट हिंदी कार्यान्वयन की सराहना की

दिनांक 13 जून 2025 को संसदीय राजभाषा समिति ने एनएचएआई के क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, शिमला का निरीक्षण किया। निरीक्षण के दौरान समिति ने कार्यालय में राजभाषा हिंदी के सफल कार्यान्वयन, फाइलिंग, पत्राचार, बोर्ड, संकेतक तथा दैनिक कार्यों में प्रभावी उपयोग की सराहना की और इसे अत्यंत संतोषजनक एवं उत्कृष्ट पाया।

संसदीय राजभाषा समिति राजभाषा अधिनियम 1963 की धारा 4 के तहत वर्ष 1976 में गठित की गई थी।

समिति का मुख्य कार्य केंद्र सरकार के कार्यालयों में हिंदी के प्रयोग की प्रगति की समीक्षा करना है।



## Blood Donation Camp Organised to Mark World Blood Donor Day

On 13th June 2025, NHAI organised a blood donation camp at its Headquarters in New Delhi to mark the 'World Blood Donor Day'. The initiative aimed to promote

awareness around the importance of regular blood donation and its life-saving impact. The event witnessed

enthusiastic participation from NHAI officials and staff members, who voluntarily contributed to this noble cause.



## NHAI Hosts Health Talk on Holistic Wellness and Stress Management

On 18th June 2025, NHAI organized a Health Talk on holistic wellness and stress management at its headquarters in New Delhi, with renowned oncologist and hypnotherapist Dr. Anil Singhvi and noted psychotherapist Ms. Surbhi Pandya. The session was graced by NHAI Chairman Shri Santosh Kumar Yadav, along with senior NHAI officials and staff members. The session focused on approaches to healthy

lifestyle, highlighting effective methods to manage chronic diseases, reverse ageing and reduce stress. Dr. Singhvi shared valuable insights on how hypnotherapy can be used to unlock the body's healing potential, while Ms. Pandya introduced the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) as a practical tool for emotional balance and stress relief.

Emphasizing the growing importance of mind-body connection in today's high-pressure work environments, NHAI Chairman encouraged the participants to take small, actionable steps towards better health and emotional well-being. To ensure wider participation, the enriching session was also streamed live to NHAI's field offices across the country.



## NHAI Celebrates 11<sup>th</sup> International Yoga Day

On the 11th International Day of Yoga, NHAI reaffirmed its commitment to promote holistic well-being and a balanced lifestyle. A special yoga session was organised at the NHAI Headquarters in New Delhi on 21st

June 2025, where NHAI officials actively participated and embraced the spirit of wellness and serenity. Apart from this, NHAI field offices across the country enthusiastically conducted yoga sessions.

Through these sessions, NHAI encouraged everyone to adopt yoga as a daily practice for physical vitality and mental peace. Here are some glimpses:



**NHAI Headquarter, New Delhi**



**RO, Kerala**



**PIU, Vizianagram**



**PIU, Udhampur**



**Chenani Nashri Tunnel on NH-44 J&K**



**PIU, Sohna**



**RO, Shimla**



**PIU, Nabrangpur**



Parsoni Khem Toll Plaza under PIU Darbhanga



RO, Jaipur



PIU, Bilaspur



RO, Bangalore



Kherki Daula Toll Plaza, Gurugram, NH-8



PIU Khammam in collaboration  
with Cedar valley school



PIU, Patna



PIU, Gajwel



RO, New Delhi

Commemorating 'एक पेड़ माँ के नाम 2.0' initiative, NHAI organised nationwide plantation drive along the National Highways.

Spreading the message of environmental sustainability, NHAI officials along

with other stakeholders participated in the drive from across the country.



RO, Hyderabad



RO, Patna



PIU, Jhansi



PIU, Kanpur



RO, Chennai



PIU, Bareilly



PIU, Roorkee



PIU, Thane





PIU, Udaipur



PIU, Varanasi



RO, Bhopal



RO, Bhubaneswar



RO, Kolkata



RO, Madurai



RO, Gandhinagar



RO, Mumbai





PIU, Ranchi



RO, UP-West



RO, Vijaywada



PIU, Patna



PIU, Himachal Pradesh



RO, Nagpur



PIU, Jalpaiguri



PIU, Nabrangpur



**Shiva kumar Kakarla**  
@shivakkakarla

Burst tire on a hot summer day on highway with family. It could have been a tough situation, but these tireless gentlemen helped us out last Saturday (07-Jun). Thank you #NHA1 #PatrolTeam on Hyd-Kurnool highway near #Kurnool for arriving within 10 mins. #1033



**Good Leadership Project-Krishna Prasad Yerramilli**  
@whyskp

Beautiful National Highway NH16 passing through Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh India. A super pleasant drive from Chennai to Guntur.

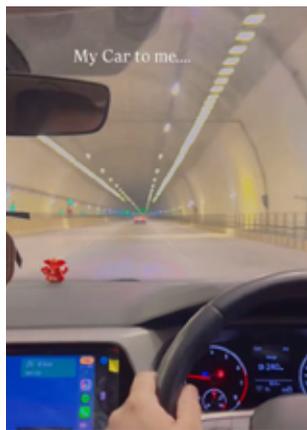
A very innovative Sky View Resto Lounge and Restaurant right on top of the Toll Plaza near Ongole.

@nitin\_gadkari Ji can appreciate his NHA1 team.



**Devender Kumar**  
@devukumar2022

I am very grateful to you for building such good roads, I am very grateful to you, I visited Haridwar, I really enjoyed the roads, especially the Delhi-Meerut expressway, thank you sir @nitin\_gadkari @narendramodi



**snazzyawi**

Rewa-Sidhi Tunnel: an Engineering Marvel  
Demonstrating its engineering excellence, NHA1 completed the construction of the Aqueduct on Bansagar Dam going towards Varanasi before the scheduled time. One of a kind structural engineering wonder, this project was completed in 109 days against the stipulated 120 days, encapsulating all types of civil engineering structures and despite having a length of 15.35 km.

**Dwarka Highway**  
@Dwarka\_Highway

#Monsoon ☁️🌈 pleasure driving on #DwarkaExpressway #DXP connecting #Gurugram n #Delhi. Zero water logging- Tks @NHA1\_Official @nitin\_gadkari



**BUILDING A NATION, NOT JUST ROADS.**

X @NHA1\_Official | f official.nhai | @nhai\_official | @NHA1\_Official

For feedback and contributions, write to us at [nhaieditor@gmail.com](mailto:nhaieditor@gmail.com)