

# Targeting Construction of National Highways at the Rate of 40 Km Per Day: Nitin Gadkari

## A New Internal Initiative “Review Mondays” Initiated by Shri Nitin Gadkari Minister for RTH and MSME

### Two Day Merathon NH Review Concludes

Shri Nitin Gadkari, Minister for Road Transport & Highways and MSME along with General (Retd.) V. K. Singh, Minister of State for Road Transport & Highways reviewed projects of all National Highway development, on 23 and 24 January 2020 at Manesar near Gurugram, Haryana. The review was done state wise. All senior officials of the Ministry, NHAI, State Governments, contractors, concessionaires, and consultants attended the review meeting. Every ongoing project was reviewed with a 360-degree view from all stakeholders. The meeting led to identification of issues and way forward with clear timelines for most of the delayed projects. The major reasons found were delay in land acquisition by State Governments, delay in regulatory clearances such as for quarrying etc. In addition, lack of coordination and communication between and within government agencies continues to delay decision making. About 740 National Highway Projects of 16 States were reviewed.

The Minister Shri Gadkari went into the minutest of detail of every project making sure a clear path forward emerged to speed up projects. Officials and contractors also committed to redoubling of efforts to ensure timely completion of projects.

The issue of timely approval of Extension of Time (EOT) and change of scope (COS) was particularly raised by the Contractors/ Concessionaire. As these timely approvals would help in facilitating lending by banks, an on-line tool called “GATI” has been launched and this will be closely monitored at the highest level. Shri Gadkari also instructed to start performance audit of officer and fix responsibility to delays.

The meeting concluded with all stakeholders committing to impart greater momentum to construction of highways by identifying issues holding up/delaying construction and completion of highways.

In order to carry the momentum of the meeting forward, Sh. Gadkari decided that monitoring and review at the official level needs greater attention and focus. To deal with this issue he has directed all chief engineers in the Ministry and all members of NHAI to organise “Review Mondays” on the first and third Monday of every month. On these days no meetings other than for the purpose of review will be held by officials. Technology and video conferencing will be the means for review and monitoring. These days will be dedicated only for reviews to impart more focus on completing highway projects. Delay in completion of projects has a high probability of leading to claims by contractors and hence the focus on review and monitoring by officials of the ministry will lead to cost savings in addition to timely delivery of projects.

Interacting with media after the meeting today, the Minister informed 22 Greenfield Corridors of length 7500 kms is being developed with a total capital cost of Rs. 3.00 lakh crore. Work has started on some while awarding all other projects are/ will be completed expeditiously. These projects are being pursued vigorously and are being implemented on priority. He added that besides reducing length and decongesting existing NHs, the projects will work as growth engines as they fast through the less developed backward / tribal areas. The development of way-side amenities will result in more opportunities for business and employment. The minister also added that the construction of National Highways in terms of kms per day have been increasing and this is targeted to reach the level of 40 kms per day.

The Minister also informed that the pilot project on convergence of National Highway works and conservation of water in Buldhana district in Maharashtra is running successfully. As many as 152 villages benefitted covering a population of 4,83,360 where 22800 wells were recharged and irrigation facilities increased in 1525 hectares. These details were shared with all the Stakeholders in the review meeting with an aim to implement the scheme in more areas.

He also informed that the progress of FASTags was also reviewed. All 537 Toll Plazas are now ETC enabled and more than 1.37 cores FASTags have been issued. My FASTag App has crossed 10 lakh down loads.

\*\*\*\*

RCJ/CKR

(Release ID: 1600477)