



TOPIC OF THE WEEK

APR'18 (05 to 11)

Topic: BharatMala Project

Bharatmala Project is the second largest highways construction project in the country since NHDP (National Highways Development Project), under which almost 50,000 km or highway roads are targeted across the country.

Bharatmala will look to improve connectivity particularly on economic corridors, border areas and far flung areas with an aim of quicker movement of cargo and boosting exports.

Bharatmala includes economic corridors of around 9,000 km, inter-corridor and feeder route of around 6,000 km, 5,000 km roads under the National Corridors Efficiency Program, border and international connectivity roads of around 2,000 km, coastal and port connectivity roads of around 2,000 km, expressways of around 800 km and 10,000 km of NHDP roads. The total length in phase 1 comes to around 34,800 km.

Bharatmala Pariyojana is a centrally-sponsored and funded road and highways project of the Government of India. The total investment for 83,677 km (51,994 mi) committed new highways is estimated at 5.35 lakh crore, making it the single largest outlay for a government road construction scheme (as of December 2017).

The project will build highways from Gujarat and Rajasthan, move to Punjab and then cover the entire string of Himalayan states - Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand - and then portions of borders of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar alongside Terai, and move to West Bengal, Sikkim, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, and right up to the Indo-Myanmar border in Manipur and Mizoram. Special emphasis will be given on providing connectivity to far-flung border and rural areas including the tribal and backward areas.

Bharatmala will connect 550 district headquarters (from current 300) to minimum 4-lane highway by raising the number of corridors to 50 (from current 6) and move 80% freight traffic (40% currently) to national highways by

connecting 24 logistics parks, 66 inter-corridors (IC) of total 8,000 km (5,000 mi), 116 feeder routes (FR) of total 7,500 km (4,700 mi) and 67 north east multimodal waterway ports.

The ambitious umbrella programme will subsume all existing highway projects including the flagship National Highways Development Project (NHDP), launched by the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government in 1998.

It is both enabler and beneficiary of other key Government of India schemes, such as Sagarmala, Dedicated Freight Corridors, Industrial corridors, UDAN-RCS, BharatNet, Digital India and Make in India.

History

India's 5,482,000 km (3,406,000 mi) road network is second largest in the world, of which only 2% (~110,000 km) are national highways (NHs) carrying 40% road traffic.

Bharatmala phase-I will raise the NH connection to a total of 77% or 550 districts out of total 716 districts from the current 42% or 300 districts connected to NH (Dec 2017). Mapping of Shortest Route for 12,000 routes carrying 90% of the India's freight, commodity-wise survey of freight movement across 600 districts, automated traffic surveys over 1,500+ points across the country, and satellite mapping of corridors to identify upgradation requirements for Bharatmala.

NHIDCL

National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation (NHIDCL) was created in 2014 as a fully owned company of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways by the Government of India to expedite construction of National Highway projects with specific focus on Northeast India.

About NHAI:

The National Highways Authority of India was constituted by an act of Parliament, the National Highways Authority of India Act, 1988. It is responsible for the development, maintenance and management of

National Highways entrusted to it and for matters connected or incidental thereto. The Authority was operationalised in Feb, 1995.

Central Road Fund (CRF)

Central Road Fund (CRF) was created as a non-lapsable fund under the "*Central Road Fund Act 2000*", by imposing a cess on petrol and diesel, to build and upgrade National Highways, State roads, rural roads, railway under/over bridges etc, and national waterways.

Budget:

Rs 5,35,000 crore have been allocated for the Bharatmala Project aimed at boosting road connectivity in the country.

The government has approved the ambitious Bharatmala programme. About 53,000 km of national highways has been identified to increase efficiency of the national corridor.

Hurdles:

Land acquisition is likely to become a major hurdle for this project. According to Icra (Indian independent and professional investment), fragmented land holdings, lack of clear land titles, dependence on local authorities, inadequate land acquisition plan at the time of preparing detailed project reports and lack of methodology for compensation are the major difficulties faced during land acquisition.

In about 80 per cent of the delayed road projects, the reason for delay is attributable to unavailability of right of way, which is the responsibility of the awarding authority.

Another major challenge for Bharatmala according to Icra is compliance to the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 which led to increase in compensation by four times the market value in rural areas and twice the market value in urban areas.

Impact

- Bharatmala will significantly boost highway infrastructure:
- Raise 6 national corridors to 50 corridors
- Raise 40% freight to 80% freight on National Highways
- Raise 300 districts to 550 districts connected by minimum 4-lane highways.

Significance of the project:

The project is expected to create nearly 100 million man days of jobs during the road construction and subsequently 22 million jobs as a result of the increased economic activity across the country.

Suggested Reading:

- ✓ <https://www.india.gov.in/spotlight/bharatmala-pariyojana-stepping-stone-towards-new-india>
- ✓ https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/62693248.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

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- ✓ <https://currentaffairs.gktoday.in/bharatmala-pariyojana-government-build-83677-km-infrastructure-projects-10201749237.html>
- ✓ <http://www.iasparliament.com/current-affairs/bharatmala-project>