

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18 - 19, 2024

[^TOP](#)

- [18,714 Km Highways Constructed Under Bharatmala Pariyojana](#)
- [Infrastructure boom in Northeast: Over 2,000 km of new railway tracks added in last decade, air traffic doubled](#)
- [Bihar's Infrastructure Boom: Chief Secretary Highlights 15-Fold Data Usage Surge, Expanding Roads, Bridges And Power](#)
- [Mata Vaishno Devi Ropeway: Here's Why Locals In J&K's Katra Are Protesting Against The Rs 250 Crore Project](#)
- [Andhra Pradesh Approves Rs 24,276 Crore For Amaravati Capital Infrastructure: Iconic Buildings, Roads, And More](#)

18,714 Km Highways Constructed Under Bharatmala Pariyojana
Construction Week Online,
December 19, 2024

Highway projects covering a total length of 26,425 km have been awarded and 18,714 km have been constructed as of October 31, 2024, under the Bharatmala Pariyojana scheme, the Parliament was informed.

Bharatmala Pariyojana was approved by the government of India in 2017 covering a length of 34,800 km to improve connectivity and reduce logistic cost in the country. The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has invested Rs 4.72 lakh crore under Bharatmala Pariyojana up to October 30 this year, Minister of Road Transport & Highways Nitin Gadkari said in a written reply in Rajya Sabha. He also said that under Port and Coastal Connectivity Roads Category, 18 projects with a length of 424 km have been awarded and 189 km have been constructed so far.

Various projects envisaged under Bharatmala Scheme are providing connectivity to different major and minor ports in various coastal states including the state of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal. In answer to another question, Nitin Gadkari said 190 projects having a total length of 3,856 km, sanctioned at a cost of Rs 815.40 billionare under construction on National Highways (NHs) in the Northeastern region. All the under-construction works are scheduled to be completed by September 2028.

Allocation is made state-wise and year-wise for all NH works in a state. These include streamlining of land acquisition and revamping of the disputes resolution mechanism. Projects are being awarded after adequate preparation in terms of land acquisition, clearances in order to avoid subsequent delays.

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Correctly worked out utility estimates obtained at the earliest after the alignment finalisation and the same form part of project appraisal.

Close coordination is taking place with concerned Ministries and state governments and regular reviews are carried out at various levels to speed up work. Approval of change of scope and extension of time proposals are also being expedited. Besides, the Network Planning Group appraisal before sanction of works is taking place so that issues with the project regarding clearances identified beforehand and solution can be worked out in advance, Nitin Gadkari said.

[^ TOP](#)

Infrastructure boom in Northeast: Over 2,000 km of new railway tracks added in last decade, air traffic doubled

FE Online,
December 19, 2024

Scindia highlighted that the Northeast has experienced a remarkable expansion in its national highways, now covering over 16,000 kilometres, up from the previous 10,000 kilometres.

Northeast development

Additionally, the pace of railway construction has more than tripled, from about 6.5 kilometres per month to over 19 kilometres per month.

Union Minister for the Development of North Eastern Region, Jyotiraditya Scindia, praised the rapid growth in the Northeast under PM Narendra Modi's leadership. He specifically highlighted the significant strides made in infrastructure development, showcasing the region's impressive transformation. Let's break it down:

Impressive growth of National Highways and Railways

Scindia noted that the Northeast has seen an extraordinary increase in its national highways network, with over 16,000 kilometres now in place—compared to just 10,000 kilometres previously. He stressed that this rapid expansion, with 5,500 kilometres of highways built in the last 10 years, demonstrates the government's commitment to improving connectivity. Additionally, the pace of railway construction has more than tripled, from about 6.5 kilometres per month to over 19 kilometres per month. Over 2,000 kilometres of new railway tracks have been added in the last decade.

Boost to Civil Aviation and Waterways Expansion

In terms of air travel, Scindia highlighted a significant growth in the region's connectivity. The number of airports has increased from 9 to 17 in recent years, and air traffic has doubled. In addition, the expansion of waterways in the Northeast has seen a remarkable increase, from just one waterway to 20, providing more transportation options for the region.

Northeast's Economic Transformation

According to Scindia, the Northeast is now one of the fastest-growing regions in India, with annual growth rates of 9.5% to 11%. This is significantly higher than the national average of 6.5% to 7.5%. The Union Minister emphasized that the region has already transformed into India's growth engine, with

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an influx of investments, including a semiconductor factory being established in Assam with an investment of ₹27,000 crore.

‘Vibrant Villages’ Vision and Global Connectivity

Scindia also praised PM Modi’s vision of transforming remote areas into “vibrant villages,” aiming for comprehensive development in border areas, including those along India’s northeast borders with China. He noted the government’s commitment to ensuring the development of these areas through increased ministerial visits and infrastructure improvements.

[^ TOP](#)

Bihar’s Infrastructure Boom: Chief Secretary Highlights 15-Fold Data Usage Surge, Expanding Roads, Bridges And Power

Swarjaya,
December 18, 2024

Bihar has seen a remarkable 15-fold increase in data consumption over the past five years as the state is witnessing extensive infrastructure development, connectivity improvements, and investments in rail and road networks, according to chief secretary Amrit Lal Meena.

Bihar has witnessed unprecedented growth in infrastructure development with its road density being the third largest in India that facilitates trade and transport.

Electricity generation in the state has grown from 700 MW to 7,000 MW, and IT parks and data centres are in the pipeline.

Highlighting the progress in the road sector, Meena said, “We have a network of 1.2 lakh kilometers of rural roads built completely during the last 20 years. The highway network, both national and state, has seen tremendous growth over the last 10 years.”

The state’s budget has outlined four expressways, including Siliguri-Gorakhpur and Patna-Purnia, with several ongoing projects, such as the Varanasi-Kolkata corridor, further enhancing connectivity.

Bridges on major rivers like the Ganga, Kosi, Gandak, and Son have significantly improved mobility.

“In Bihar, Gangaji is 400 kilometers. In 400 kilometers, there were only four bridges with a 10-lane width. Now, we have 14 bridges constructed or under construction, with a lane width of 70,” Meena said.

These developments have boosted agriculture, education, and healthcare access.

On the railways, Meena noted that the Sonnagar-Dadri section of the dedicated freight corridor is operational, and work is progressing on the Sonnagar-Andal section. Single-lane railway lines are being converted into double lanes, with plans for a third line on congested routes.

Bihar has also made strides in gas infrastructure, with 1,700 kilometers of pipeline and all 38 districts under city gas distribution.

In telecom, mobile users have increased from 6 crore in 2019 to 7.25 crore in 2024, while average data usage has surged from 1.67 GB to 27 GB per month.

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Power consumption has grown from 700 MW in 2005 to a peak of 8,000 MW this year.

“We are coming up with the Bihar Renewable Energy Policy and pump hydro project policy,” Meena added.

MSME credit flow has risen from Rs 8,000 crore in 2015 to Rs 77,000 crore in 2023-24, reflecting a supportive business environment.

The state is also expanding medical colleges, engineering institutes, and polytechnics to create a skilled workforce.

[^ TOP](#)

Mata Vaishno Devi Ropeway: Here's Why Locals In J&K's Katra Are Protesting Against The Rs 250 Crore Project

The Hindu,
December 18, 2024

A complete shutdown will be observed in Katra in Jammu today (18 December) as locals protest against the proposed Rs 250-crore ropeway linking Tarakote Marg to Sanji Chhat in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district.

The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Sangharsh Samiti, a body representing shopkeepers, pony operators, and palanquin owners, reportedly decided on the bandh during a recent meeting, citing concerns about the ropeway's adverse effects on Katra's economy.

Opponents of the project claim that the ropeway will bypass Katra's market, potentially affecting thousands of shopkeepers and service providers reliant on pilgrim traffic.

On 15 December, hundreds of protesters marched through Katra's main market, chanting slogans against the shrine board for setting up the ropeway project.

Katra serves as the base camp for pilgrims heading to Mata Vaishno Devi temple.

Former minister Jugal Kishore Sharma joined the rally, which began at Shalimar Park and ended at the bus stand.

Protesters also demanded the release of individuals arrested after a clash with police last month over the ropeway project.

Protests erupted last month when shopkeepers, labourers, and pony and palanquin operators staged a four-day demonstration against the shrine board's decision to proceed with the ropeway project.

“We believe this project is ill-conceived and is like playing with our religious sentiments besides making the stakeholders jobless. We have already made it clear to the divisional commissioner-led committee constituted by the lieutenant governor on the issue time and again,” news agency PTI quoted former minister Jugal Kishore Sharma as saying.

Sharma clarified that the protesters oppose the ropeway project, not the shrine board.

“The central government and lieutenant governor immediately put a halt to the project which we believe will destroy the pilgrimage and also hit Katra economically,” he added.

Sharma stated that the Samiti would resume protests, which were paused last month following assurances from the district administration.

“We were promised a solution on the issue by 15 December but nothing was done. They have not respected our demand for revocation of FIR and instead arrested the protesters,” he said, seeking support of the Jammu Chamber of Commerce and Jammu Bar Association to the protesters.

Vaishno Devi Trek Mazdoor Union President Bhupinder Singh Jamwal announced that five Samiti members would also sit on a hunger strike during the 18 December bandh.

“We want a written assurance either from the lieutenant governor or home minister that no ropeway will be constructed,” he said.

[^TOP](#)

Andhra Pradesh Approves Rs 24,276 Crore For Amaravati Capital Infrastructure: Iconic Buildings, Roads, And More

Swarajya,
December 19, 2024

Amaravati capital city is envisioned to be the people centric pioneer smart city of India built around sustainability and liveability principles.

The Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA), chaired by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, has approved infrastructure projects worth Rs 24,276 crore for the greenfield capital city of Amaravati.

The approval was granted during the 43rd APCRDA meeting, focusing on the development of trunk roads, layouts, and iconic buildings, Municipal Minister P Narayana announced at a press conference on Monday.

"The 43rd CRDA meeting approved Rs 24,276 crore funds for the construction of trunk roads, layouts, and iconic bhavans (buildings) in Amaravati capital," said Narayana. He also highlighted that Rs 45,249 crore had been approved in total across the past four CRDA meetings.

The minister provided details about key projects, including the upcoming Assembly building, which will span 103 acres, covering 11.2 lakh sq ft with a height of 250 metres. "When the Assembly is not in session, people can visit the top of the building to enjoy a bird's eye view of the capital," he said.

The High Court building will occupy 42 acres, with a total area of 20.32 lakh sq ft. It will rise to a height of 55 metres across eight storeys and will be constructed at a cost of Rs 1,048 crore. Additionally, the General Administration Department (GAD) building will feature 47 floors and cover 17 lakh sq ft.

Narayana further announced the construction of five additional towers, with a total area of 69 lakh sq ft, at a cost of Rs 4,688 crore.

Out of the approved funds, Rs 9,699 crore has been allocated for four main roads spanning 580 km and other facilities, while Rs 7,794 crore has been earmarked for trunk roads and related infrastructure.

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The tendering process for these projects is set to begin on December 23, with the aim of completing most tenders by the end of the month and the remainder by January.

"At any cost, we will complete Amaravati capital construction in the next three years to make it one of the best five cities in the world," Narayana stated.

[^TOP](#)