

NEWSLETTER

CONSTRUCTION INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATES

THURSDAY, MARCH 05, 2026

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Rs 16,000 Crore Plan To Widen Pune–Mumbai Expressway To 10 Lanes In Final Review Stage, Cabinet Nod Awaited

Swarajya,
March 5, 2026

The Maharashtra government's proposal to widen the Pune–Mumbai Expressway into a 10-lane superhighway is currently undergoing an independent technical appraisal before it is placed before the state cabinet for approval.

Senior officials from the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) confirmed that the project proposal is being reviewed by Veermata Jijabai Technological Institute (VJTI), which has been tasked with carrying out a third-party assessment of the plan's technical feasibility and design framework, The Times of India reported.

The evaluation is expected to serve as the final technical review before the proposal is presented to the cabinet's infrastructure committee, chaired by the chief minister.

"The third-party assessment will be the final technical and feasibility review before the cabinet consideration. Once the cabinet clears it, the work can begin. Its implementation will take about four years," a senior official of MSRDC was quoted as saying.

The detailed project report for the expansion was submitted earlier this month and proposes upgrading the existing 94.6 km access-controlled corridor from eight lanes to ten lanes.

"This is an upgrade from our earlier eight-lane proposal. The 10-lane project will cost around Rs16,000 crore. The land acquisition cost pegged is at approximately Rs200 crore," the official said.

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Centre To Shoulder Rs 90,000 Crore Cost Escalation For Mumbai–Ahmedabad Bullet Train, No Fresh JICA Loan Planned: Report

PTI,
March 5, 2026

The Union government is preparing to absorb an additional Rs 90,000 crore burden on the Mumbai–Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail project, choosing not to seek further borrowing from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) despite a steep rise in overall costs, according to an ET report.

The 508 km bullet train corridor, originally estimated at around Rs 1.1 lakh crore, is now expected to cost approximately Rs 1.98 lakh crore, an escalation of nearly 83 per cent. The increase has been attributed to delays, implementation challenges and associated factors.

Officials familiar with the development said the Railway Ministry will soon place a revised cost estimate before the Union Cabinet and seek approval for additional budgetary support.

The ministry is expected to approach the Finance Ministry to bridge the funding gap and ensure timely completion of the project.

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JICA is currently financing about 81 per cent of the original project cost through an Official Development Assistance (ODA) loan at a highly concessional interest rate of 0.1 per cent per annum, with a repayment tenure of 50 years, including a 15-year moratorium.

However, sources indicated that no additional loan is being sought under the same arrangement for the revised outlay.

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Government Tightens Rules On National Highways Projects, Defines ‘Catastrophic Failures’ And Imposes Strict Performance Penalties

Swarajya,
March 5, 2026

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has strengthened its oversight of National Highways (NH) projects by formally defining “Catastrophic Failures” and linking such incidents to strict performance penalties for contractors and concessionaires.

In recent policy circulars concerning modifications to qualification criteria for EPC projects and the “Rating of Contractors/Concessionaires working on National Highways Projects”, the Ministry has introduced sharper evaluation benchmarks.

Under the revised rating framework, contractors will face a deduction of minus thirty (-30) marks for each instance of a catastrophic failure.

The circular outlines specific events that would qualify as catastrophic, like the collapse of any bridge, flyover, underpass, or retaining wall during the contract or design period.

It also covers serious road damage where a carriageway has to be closed or diverted for repairs, either for a continuous stretch of 50 metres or more, or for smaller damaged portions that together exceed 1 per cent of the total project length, within the defect liability period or within five years, whichever is earlier.

The definition further includes the collapse of launching equipment or temporary support structures during construction if it results in loss of life.

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MMRDA Fast-Tracks ‘Project-SMART’ To Build Next-Generation Station Cities Along Mumbai–Ahmedabad Bullet Train Corridor

Swarajya,
March 5, 2026

The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) has unveiled an ambitious plan to reshape urban growth around India’s first bullet train route, with Thane and Virar set to emerge as major economic and multimodal hubs under a new initiative titled Project-SMART.

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The programme focuses on integrated station area development along the Mumbai–Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR) corridor.

Rather than limiting the project to rail connectivity alone, authorities are seeking to build “next-generation station cities” that combine transport infrastructure with commercial, residential and civic development.

To advance the blueprint, MMRDA convened a high-level strategy workshop at its Bandra-Kurla Complex headquarters.

Senior representatives from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), National High Speed Rail Corporation Ltd (NHSRCL), Maharashtra State Town Planning and Valuation Department, Thane Municipal Corporation, Vasai Virar City Municipal Corporation and experts from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) took part.

The workshop was organised in collaboration with MoHUA and JICA under an ongoing technical cooperation arrangement.

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Private Sector Set To Commit Nearly Rs 1 Trillion To BOT Highway Projects In FY27: Report

Business Standard,
March 5, 2026

India’s road sector could witness its largest-ever annual private investment in FY27, with developers expected to commit close to Rs 1 trillion towards build-operate-transfer (BOT) toll highway projects, according to a report by Mint.

Highway projects worth around Rs 35,000 crore, reserved exclusively for private participation under the BOT (toll) model, are likely to be awarded in the first quarter of the next financial year.

In addition, detailed project reports for schemes valued between Rs 50,000 crore and Rs 60,000 crore are being finalised and may be opened for bidding in the latter half of FY27.

“As all these would be BOT (toll) projects, the private sector is expected to give investment commitments of close to Rs 1 trillion for building greenfield highways,” a person aware of the development was quoted as saying.

The renewed pipeline marks a decisive shift back towards private-led highway construction after years of muted activity under the BOT framework.

Unlike the hybrid annuity model (HAM), BOT projects require higher upfront equity and place traffic and toll revenue risks squarely on developers. However, investor sentiment appears to be improving, aided by policy tweaks and stronger toll collection systems.

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