



NEWSLETTER

CONSTRUCTION INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATES

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2026

[^ TOP](#)

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- [NHAI Unveils Uniform Design Verification Framework For Major Bridges And Critical Highway Structures](#)
- [Mumbai-Ahmedabad Bullet Train Project: 371 Km Of Viaduct Completed, Over 9,300 OHE Masts Installed](#)
- [Kerala Plans Revised Land Acquisition Rules To Secure 500 Acres For Vizhinjam Port-Led Industrial Development: Report](#)
- [Leh Airport's New Terminal, 298-Km Strategic Himalayan Road: PM Modi Inaugurates Rs 3,350 Crore Infrastructure Projects In Ladakh](#)

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NHAI Unveils Uniform Design Verification Framework For Major Bridges And Critical Highway Structures

Swarajya,
October 16, 2026

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has introduced a uniform system for independent verification of designs and drawings for major bridges and critical structures across national highway projects.

The policy will come into effect on 1 December 2026, and apply to all new Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC), Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM) and Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) National Highway projects.

It will also cover eligible ongoing projects in which design verification or proof-checking has not yet begun.

Under the new mechanism, designs will be examined independently by empanelled Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), reputed government technical institutions and experienced technical firms.

Around 12 IITs, including IIT Delhi, IIT Bombay, IIT Roorkee and IIT Kharagpur, along with other premier institutions, have expressed willingness to participate in the initiative.

The move aims to strengthen structural safety and improve construction quality across India's highway network.

The verification will cover structural design calculations, engineering analysis and drawings, as well as hydrological and hydraulic studies wherever applicable.

The exercise is intended to identify potential design deficiencies at an early stage and ensure compliance with applicable Indian Roads Congress (IRC) codes, technical specifications and contractual requirements.

The policy covers major river bridges with a design discharge of at least 3,000 cubic metres per second, structures with an individual effective span of 40 metres or more, and other special or complex structures identified by NHAI.

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Under the revised procedure, the contractor or concessionaire will submit the design and drawings for review or approval, as applicable under the contract. Three institutions or firms will then be proposed from NHAI's empanelled list.

Following independent verification, necessary modifications to designs will be considered before their review or approval by NHAI, in accordance with the applicable contractual provisions.

The initiative aims to detect design-related issues early and ensure major bridges, designed for a service life of 100 years or more, meet safety standards.

The framework will establish uniform quality assurance practices across different project delivery formats, creating a nationwide institutional mechanism for design vetting of critical bridge infrastructure.

Delays in completing the checks will not automatically entitle contractors to extensions or additional claims against NHAI.

[^ TOP](#)

Mumbai-Ahmedabad Bullet Train Project: 371 Km Of Viaduct Completed, Over 9,300 OHE Masts Installed

PTI,

October 16, 2026

The Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR) project has recorded significant construction progress, with 371 km of viaduct construction completed as of September 2026, according to the National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL), the implementing agency for India's first bullet train corridor.

According to NHSRCL, apart from the viaduct construction, 456 km of pier work, alongside 18 river bridges and 16 steel bridges have been completed on the 508-km bullet train corridor.

Additionally, noise barriers have been installed along 301 km of the alignment to minimise operational noise.

Track-related infrastructure has also advanced, with 98 km of track linking completed.

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Meanwhile, more than 9,300 overhead equipment (OHE) masts have been installed across 206 km, marking progress towards electrification.

In Maharashtra, excavation of four mountain tunnels has been completed, while 5 km of tunnelling using the New Austrian Tunnelling Method (NATM) has been achieved.

The project, being developed with Japanese technical and financial assistance, is designed to support high-speed train operations at speeds of up to 320 kmph.

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw had earlier said that the construction of the Vapi-Surat section of the corridor is targeted for completion by December 2026, after which testing and associated works will follow.

The Surat-Bilimora section is expected to become the first operational stretch of the corridor in 2027.

Work is also progressing on India's indigenously developed high-speed train.

The first body frame has been completed and is undergoing structural testing, while the train is expected to begin track trials by May-June 2027.

The corridor, which is India's first bullet train project, will connect Mumbai and Ahmedabad through 12 stations across Maharashtra, Gujarat and Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

Nearly 90 per cent of the alignment is being built as an elevated corridor, while the remaining stretches include tunnels, bridges and station areas.

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw had earlier announced that India's first bullet train will begin its inaugural 100-km run between Surat and Vapi in August 2027, The New Indian Express reported.

The section is part of the larger 508-km Mumbai-Ahmedabad high-speed corridor, also known as Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project, which is expected to be fully operational by 2029.

Vaishnaw said the Mumbai-Ahmedabad travel time would drop to 1 hour 58 minutes once the corridor is ready.

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He added that the first operational run in August 2027 would be limited to the 100-km Surat–Vapi stretch.

"A significant milestone is that the bullet train will cover the distance between Ahmedabad and Mumbai in just 1 hour 58 minutes upon the completion of the high-speed rail corridor. The inaugural run in August 2027 will cover 100 km between Surat and Vapi," Vaishaw said.

The minister said trains on the 508-km corridor will operate at speeds of up to 320 kmph.

With four stops, the Mumbai–Ahmedabad trip will take 1 hour 58 minutes, while halting at all 12 stations will extend the journey to 2 hours 17 minutes.

"The bullet train will cover the distance between Mumbai and Ahmedabad in 1 hour 58 minutes with four stops. However, if it halts at all 12 stations, the total journey time will be 2 hours 17 minutes," Vaishnav said.

The corridor will be opened in phases, covering the Vapi-Surat, Vapi-Ahmedabad, and Thane-Ahmedabad stretches before the Mumbai-Ahmedabad section becomes operational in the final stage.

The full corridor is expected to be completed by December 2029, he added.

[^ TOP](#)

Kerala Plans Revised Land Acquisition Rules To Secure 500 Acres For Vizhinjam Port-Led Industrial Development: Report

PTI,

October 16, 2026

The Kerala government is preparing to revise its rules for negotiated land purchases to accelerate the acquisition of around 500 acres for industrial and logistics projects linked to Vizhinjam International Seaport, according to a Times of India report.

The proposed changes aim to offer more attractive compensation to willing landowners and reduce delays in assembling land for port-related infrastructure.

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The industries department is working with the revenue department to finalise the revised provisions. A government order is expected to enable purchases under the new framework, following which the state plans to begin acquiring parcels already identified for development.

“We are moving positively on this new proposal to revise the norms. Once the govt order is issued, we will immediately start acquiring land which has already been identified. We are planning to complete the proceedings as soon as possible,” APM Mohammed Hanish, Additional Chief Secretary of the Industries Department, was quoted as saying by TOI.

Around 500 acres have been identified in Neyyattinkara and Kattakada taluks.

The Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (Kinfra) is overseeing the identification of suitable sites, taking into account road and rail links, proximity to the port and the requirements of prospective industries.

The land is intended for a range of port-linked facilities, including container freight stations, warehouses, logistics parks, processing units and manufacturing facilities.

Sites with suitable railway connectivity could accommodate freight-oriented infrastructure, while other parcels may be used for industrial and warehousing projects.

The government had previously considered land pooling to support planned development along the proposed outer area growth corridor.

However, fragmented landholdings, high population density and the need to coordinate with numerous owners have posed challenges to this approach. The state is now pursuing negotiated purchases based on mutually agreed compensation.

The initiative has received financial backing in the 2026-27 state budget, which allocated Rs 1,000 crore to Kinfra for land acquisition linked to port-led industrial development.

Kinfra has been identifying land parcels, while discussions with owners and valuation work have formed part of the preparatory process.

[^ TOP](#)

Leh Airport's New Terminal, 298-Km Strategic Himalayan Road: PM Modi Inaugurates Rs 3,350 Crore Infrastructure Projects In Ladakh

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Business Standard,
October 16, 2026

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today (15 October) inaugurated five major infrastructure projects worth Rs 3,350 crore in Ladakh via video conferencing, marking a significant development push for the strategically important Union Territory.

The projects span airport infrastructure, road connectivity, hydropower, heritage conservation and water security.

The centrepiece is the new passenger terminal building at Kushok Bakula Rimpochee Airport in Leh, built at a cost of Rs 640 crore.

Spread over 23,800 square metres, the three-level facility is designed to handle 35 lakh passengers annually, tripling capacity from the current 10 lakh.

The terminal incorporates geothermal energy to reduce its carbon footprint and can handle up to 54 flights daily, compared with the existing capacity of around 18 flights.

PM Modi also dedicated the 298-kilometre Nimmu-Padum-Darcha Road, constructed by the Border Roads Organisation.

The strategic road connects Nimmu in Leh with Darcha in Himachal Pradesh through the remote Zaskar Valley, providing an alternative connectivity corridor to Ladakh alongside the Srinagar-Leh and Manali-Leh highways. The route strengthens strategic mobility for the armed forces whilst boosting economic development in the Zaskar region.

Additional projects include the nine-megawatt Hanu Small Hydroelectric Project and the 66 kV Double-Circuit Dah-Hanu-Khaltsi Transmission Line, aimed at strengthening energy security and improving the reliability of Ladakh's electricity network.

The Prime Minister also inaugurated India's first Petroglyph Conservation Park at Sindhu Ghat in Leh, preserving the region's ancient archaeological heritage.

Addressing the gathering, PM Modi stated that the projects would make travel easier, improve electricity facilities and increase water availability.

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The package includes 40 water bodies developed across 40 villages under Project Him Sarovar, addressing Ladakh's unique geographical and climatic challenges through water conservation aligned with Mission Amrit Sarovar objectives.

[^ TOP](#)

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