

Centre approves Chambal, Narmada Express ways in MP

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BHOPAL: In an effort to boost up development through road connectivity in Madhya Pradesh the Centre has approved two major express ways, Chambal Express-way and Narmada Express-way, to connect the state with Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Gujarat. The government has also allotted Rs2 lakh crore for the development of highways of which 2021km roads will be converted into national highways.

"It's chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's idea to develop two major express ways, one in Chambal and other connecting cities situated on the bank of river Narmada, up to Ahmedabad. We have approved the plan and asked the government to provide land for alignment," said union road transport and highways minister Nitin Gadkari, on Tuesday.

Gadkari also inaugurated two national highway projects in the state. First 61km two lane highway in Rajgarh district, which connects Biaora town to areas on the Rajasthan border. This will cost Rs221 crore. Another 141.26km Dewas-Biaora four lane road will be constructed with an estimated cost of Rs1584 crore.

"The Centre will provide Rs 2 lakh crore to Madhya Pradesh during a period of next two years. On the demand made by chief minister Chouhan, 2021km long seven different roads in the state will be converted into national highways," Gadkari told reporters at a press briefing at chief minister's official residence.

He said the Narmada Express-way will begin from Amarkantak and connect the state with Chhattisgarh and Gujarat. Similarly, the Chambal Express-way will connect Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

Admitting lapses on the part of contractors during development of highways, the union minister claimed that new roads were being constructed according to international standards and these roads will not develop potholes for next 200-years.

"I am ashamed of lapses and delays in the development projects but I assure that the roads being constructed these days will not get damaged or develop potholes for next 200-years," said the minister.

He further informed that the transport department was not only concentrating on road construction work but also focusing on developing 20,000-km of inland waterways in the country.

"In Madhya Pradesh, the waterways will be developed on Chambal, Narmada and Tonk rivers," he said.

Earlier, the union minister laid the foundation stones for the widening of 85km long road from Chhatipahad to Khajuraho costing at Rs 920.46-crore, widening with paved shoulder of 44.70-Km long road from Angor to Chhatarpur costing Rs 178.23-crore and widening of 90km long road from Sanchi to Sagar worth Rs 287.34-crore at a function in Naugaon of Chhatarpur district.

Chief minister Chouhan said that national highways has approved tenders for quality work and the government has also requested to open 100 driver training centres in the state, which has been approved by the union minister. The government will provide space, training to the drivers and generate employment for youths, he added.

No exemption on toll tax

Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Tuesday denied exemption of toll fee to the public. Replying to a query on waiving toll fee Gadkari said, "Toll fee will not be waived anywhere for anybody. Even journalists will have to pay. If we want good quality work they we will have to pay for it," he reiterated.

On facilities given to MPs and MLAs, whether they will have to pay the toll, the union minister maintained that there is no proposal to impose toll fee on lawmakers.

"The Central government had already made provisions for a toll-free access to the lawmakers. All MPs and MLAs were given exemption from toll fee in the rules and I am not going to change the rules," he said.