

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-2652
ANSWERED ON- 18/12/2024

EXCESS TOLL CHARGES COLLECTED BY VARIOUS TOLL PLAZAS

2652. SHRI KESRIDEVSINH JHALA:

Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is fact that crores of rupees as excess toll have been collected by various toll plazas in the country as noted by CAG during the delayed period of construction;
- (b) whether this violated rule stating that no user fee shall be levied for the delayed period, leading to higher toll collection from commuters, if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the helpline no. 1033 set up by NHAI to address queries and complaints at national highway fee plazas is monitored regularly; and
- (d) whether measures are being taken to ensure that overcollection is prevented at toll plazas, if so, details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

(SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI)

- (a) to (b) Details of cases noted by CAG regarding excess user fee collected during delayed period of construction, are at Annexure.
- (c) The helpline number 1033, set up by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), is monitored regularly. It is designed to address various issues and complaints related to National Highway Fee Plazas, including concerns about User Fee collection, FASTag operations and emergency services. The helpline operates 24/7 and is managed to ensure prompt responses to complaints and queries.
- (d) Several measures are being implemented to prevent over-collection at Fee Plazas and ensure transparency in toll operations such as implementation of FASTag, rate display boards, regular audits and inspections etc.

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (a) to (b) OF RAJYA SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2652 FOR ANSWER ON 18.12.2024 ASKED BY SHRI KESRIDEVSINH JHALA REGARDING EXCESS TOLL CHARGES COLLECTED BY VARIOUS TOLL PLAZAS.

Details of cases noted by CAG regarding excess user fee collected during delayed period of construction:

1. Vandalur to Guduvancherry in Tambaram – Tindivanam section of NH-32 in the State of Tamil Nadu

As part of the 'Thematic Audit (TA)' on toll operations in NHAI in Southern India during 2020-21 carried out by the Director General of Commercial Audit, Chennai, it was observed that during 8-laning of the stretch from Vandalur to Guduvancherry in Tambaram – Tindivanam section of NH-32, reduction of user-fee at 75% as per Sub-rule 9 of Rule 4 of NH Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules 2008 was not implemented during construction, thereby collecting an excess amount of Rs.6.54 Crore from August, 2018 to March, 2021. However, this amount has been deposited in the Consolidated Fund of India (CFI). Subsequently, the user-fee has been reduced to 75% w.e.f. April 2021 and 100% user-fee has been restored on 01.04.2023 after completion of the 8-laning work (except for 500m, for which 100% fee was restored 01.04.2024). It is to confirm that the excess amount has been deposited into CFI and not received by the Concessionaire.

2. Chitra Durga to Davangere section of NH-4 in the State of Karnataka

CAG raised concerns about excess user fee collection during the delayed period at the Hebbalu and Chalageri Fee Plazas in the State of Karnataka. However, it has been clarified that the delay in reducing the user fees was minimal, as the Fee Rates for the 6-laning projects at Chalageri and Hebbalu were reduced to 75% starting from January 26, 2018. This reduction was based on the declaration of the Appointed Date (AD) for the Chitradurga to Davangere project on December 27, 2017, and the Davangere to Haveri project on January 24, 2018 as per NH fee Rules, 2008.

Although the Fee rates were reduced, Fee collection continued beyond the scheduled completion date due to the Extension of Time (EOT) granted because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The EOT for the Chitra Durga to Davangere project was from June 24, 2020, to June 23, 2021, and for the Davangere to Haveri project, it was from July 24, 2020, to May 28, 2021. As a result, the scheduled completion period was effectively extended to the EOT date, meaning there was no excess Fee collection during this period.

The delay in completing the Chalageri and Hebbalu projects was caused by factors beyond the control of both the Concessionaire and NHAI, specifically the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The projects were completed in accordance with the approved EOT schedules, and the Fee Collection revenue collected was remitted to the Consolidated Fund of India, ensuring compliance with financial regulations.
