

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS**

**LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 123
ANSWERED ON 13TH FEBRUARY, 2025**

TOLL FRAUDS

***123. THIRU DAYANIDHI MARAN:**

Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

सड़क परिवहन और राजमार्ग मंत्री

be pleased to state:

- (a) the measures that the Government currently has in place to detect and prevent fraud at toll plazas;**
- (b) the frequency at which toll plaza systems are audited for security and operational integrity along with the mechanism available for the purpose thereof;**
- (c) whether there are specific standards or certifications that toll plaza software must comply with to ensure robustness against tampering and if so, the details thereof;**
- (d) whether there are plans to upgrade the FASTag system to detect discrepancies or unauthorized software installations in real time and if so, the details thereof;**
- (e) whether the large-scale fraudulent operations, like the recent report of a scam spanning forty-two toll plazas in fourteen States were not detected earlier and if so, the reasons therefor;**
- (f) the manner in which the Government plans to address the systemic vulnerabilities exploited in this case; and**
- (g) whether toll plaza operators and IT personnel are subjected to background checks before being employed, if so, the details thereof and the penalties or punitive actions enforced against toll plaza operators involved in fraud?**

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

(SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI)

(a) to (g) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (g) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 123 FOR ANSWER ON 13.02.2025 ASKED BY THIRU DAYANIDHI MARAN REGARDING TOLL FRAUDS.

(a) Presently, approximately more than 98% of user fee collection takes place through FASTag under National Electronic Toll Collection (NETC) program. All the FASTag transactions are processed in a secure ecosystem involving Toll Management System Software, Acquirer Bank at fee plaza, National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) as Central Clearing House (CCH) and FASTag Issuer Bank. The transaction involves a transparent process wherein the deducted user fee (Toll) is informed to the highway users and recorded in a central repository. The Electronic Toll Collection (ETC) system is designed such that no FASTag transaction can take place without the participation of all three stakeholders i.e., Acquirer Bank at user fee plaza, NPCI and Issuer Bank.

Further, the user fee collecting agencies are obligated to process the cash collection also through the Toll Management System of user fee plaza, so that a centralized record of all the collection (FASTag/Cash) is maintained. In terms of the contract entered in between NHAI and the fee plaza operator, the cash collected from Invalid/Non FASTag vehicles is to be shared equally between National Highway Authority of India (NHA) and the Toll Agency.

Also, monitoring of cash collection and exempted vehicles is part of half yearly internal audits of NHAI PIUs based on which corrective measures are taken to further improve the ETC penetration.

In addition to above, the Government has appointed System Integrators to monitor the user fee plaza operations 24X7 and to report to the Central Control Room of any suspicious activity occurring at the user fee plaza.

(b) The System Integrators (SI) at user fee plazas are empaneled by Indian Highways Management Company Limited (IHMCL) for implementation of NETC program. Half yearly audit of user fee collection

are being done by Internal Auditors of NHAI and also by Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG).

In addition to above, to ensure operational integrity and transparency in user fee collection, NHAI vide Policy Circular dated 25.01.2024 has issued a Standard Operating Procedure for ensuring Operational Transparency in Tolling Operation to be followed by the Field Officers (Regional Officers and Project Directors). The SOP includes provisions of surprise checks at toll plazas and regular monitoring to ensure that all transactions at toll plazas (Cash/FASTag) are processed through the Toll Management System Software.

(c) The empaneled System Integrators are mandated to get their Toll Management System (TMS) Software certified by Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) every 12 months. As per the latest empanelment guidelines of IHMCL, the TMS software is also required to be certified by Standardization Testing and Quality Certification (STQC), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India.

Additionally, the empanelment guidelines of system integrators mention specific modules to be present in the TMS software.

There has been no breach in the ETC system which account for more than 98% of the user fee collection. However, it is reported that at Atraila Shiv Gulam fee plaza, there was full cash collected, part of which was processed through an unauthorised handheld machine and not through the Toll Management System Software of the fee Plaza. Learning from this incident, NHAI aims to strengthen the cash collection process from invalid/non FASTag vehicles and additional surveillance is being contemplated to strictly monitor the count of vehicle passing through the fee plaza to tally it with the receipts at the toll plaza.

(d) NHAI is considering the installation of audit cameras at high-value toll plazas to independently monitor the accurate count and classification of passing vehicles using Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Additionally, NHAI has invited bids for the implementation of a FASTag and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR)-based barrier-free tolling system on a pilot basis at Gharaunda, Choryasi, Nemili, UER-II and Dwarka Expressway. This system enables user fee collection exclusively through FASTag. E-notices are proposed for Invalid/Non-FASTag vehicles, thus eliminating the cash collection from the toll collection process.

(e) Government has received some reports on fraudulent operations at user fee plazas. The matter is being investigated and strict action will be taken against those found guilty.

(f) NHAI has instructed field officers and the System Integrators to further improve the monitoring system and increase the surprise checks at the fee plazas.

(g) The necessary checks as per obligation of the Contract Agreement with Toll Agencies are implemented. In case of any non-compliance of the obligations including operational transparency by the Toll Operators, necessary penalties as per Contract Agreement are imposed, which includes debarment from NHAI for a period up to one year.

Further, NHAI strictly monitors the Contractual obligations of the Toll Collection Agencies. In past 7 agencies have been debarred/monetarily penalised for breach of Contractual Obligations including breach of Operational Transparency.
