



सत्यमेव जयते

REPORT
NO.

317

PARLIAMENT OF INDIA
RAJYA SABHA

DEPARTMENT-RELATED PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE
ON TRANSPORT, TOURISM AND CULTURE

THREE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH REPORT

**Demands for Grants (2022-23) of Ministry of Road Transport
and Highways**

(Presented to the Rajya Sabha on 14th March, 2022)
(Laid on the Table of Lok Sabha on 14th March, 2022)



Rajya Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi
March, 2022/ Phalguna, 1943 (Saka)

Website: <https://rajyasabha.nic.in>
E-mail: rsc-tt@sansad.nic.in

Hindi version of this publication is also available

PARLIAMENT OF INDIA RAJYA SABHA

DEPARTMENT-RELATED PARLIAMENTARY
STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT,
TOURISM AND CULTURE

THREE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH REPORT

**Demands for Grants (2022-23) of Ministry of Road Transport and
Highways**

*(Presented to the Rajya Sabha on 14th March, 2022)
(Laid on the Table of Lok Sabha on 14th March, 2022)*



**RAJYA SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

March, 2022/ Phalguna, 1943 (Saka)

CONTENTS

	PAGES
1. COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE	i
2. INTRODUCTION	ii
3. ACRONYMS	iii-vi
4. REPORT	1-66
5. RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS-AT A GLANCE	67-91
6. MINUTES	92-99
7. ANNEXURE	100

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

(2021-22)

(Constituted on 13th September, 2021)

1. **Shri T.G. Venkatesh** - Chairman

RAJYA SABHA

2. Shri Prasanna Acharya
3. Shrimati Priyanka Chaturvedi
4. Shri Sambhaji Chhatrapati
5. Shri Shaktisinh Gohil
6. Shri Md. Nadimul Haque
7. Shri Jugalsinh Lokhandwala
8. Dr. Sonal Mansingh
9. Shri Tiruchi Siva
10. Shri Vinay Dinu Tendulkar

LOK SABHA

11. Shri Anto Antony
12. Shri Margani Bharat
13. Shri Tapir Gao
14. Shri Rahul Kaswan
15. Shri Ramesh Chandra Majhi
16. Shri Sunil Baburao Mendhe
17. Shri K. Muraleedharan
18. Shri S. S. Palanimanickam
19. Shri Chhedi Paswan
20. Shri Kamlesh Paswan
21. Shri Sunil Kumar Pintu
22. Shri Prince Raj
23. Shri Tirath Singh Rawat
24. Shrimati Mala Roy
25. Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy
26. Shri Dushyant Singh
27. Shri Rajbahadur Singh
28. Shri Ramdas C. Tadas
29. Shri Manoj Tiwari
30. Shri Krupal Balaji Tumane
31. Shri Dinesh Chandra Yadav

SECRETARIAT

Shri Puneet Kumar, Joint Secretary
Shri Swarabji B., Director
Shri P. Narayanan, Director
Shri Dinesh Singh, Additional Director
Shri Rajendra Prasad Shukla, Additional Director
Shri Ranajit Chakraborty, Under Secretary
Shri Gaurav Singh Gahlain, Assistant Committee Officer

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman, Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture, having been authorized by the Committee to present on its behalf, do hereby present this Three Hundred Seventeenth Report on Demands for Grants (2022-23) of Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

2. The Committee, at its meeting held on 16th February, 2022 considered the subject and heard the Secretary and other officials of Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

3. The Committee wishes to express its thanks to the officers of Ministry of Road Transport and Highways for placing before the Committee, the material and information desired in connection with the subject and for clarifying the points raised by the Members.

4. The Committee considered and adopted the Report in its meeting held on the 7th March, 2022.

NEW DELHI;
March 7, 2022
Phalgun 16, 1943 (Saka)

(T.G. Venkatesh)
Chairman,
Department-related Parliamentary Standing
Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture,
Rajya Sabha

ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIS	Automotive Industry Standards
AITD	Asian Institute Of Transport Development
AP	Andhra Pradesh
API	Application Programming Interface
APSRTC	Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation
APUIAML	Andhra Pradesh Urban Infrastructure Asset Management Limited
ARAI	Automotive Research Association of India
ATN	Action Taken Note
ATS	Automated Test Station
BE	Budget Estimates
BHU	Banaras Hindu University
BITS	Birla Institute of Technology and Science
BM	Bharatmala
BMP	Bharatmala Pariyojna
BOT	Build-Operate-Transfer
BRO	Borders Road Organisation
CA	Chartered Accountant
C&AG/ CAG	Comptroller and Auditor General of India
CBU	Completely Built Unit
CCIE	Conciliation Committee of Independent Experts
CEE	Committee on Establishment Expenditure
CGM	Chief General Manager
CIRT	Central Institute of Road Transport
CKD	Completely Knocked Down
CMVR	Central Motor Vehicles Rule
COVID	Corona Virus Disease
CRF	Central Road Fund
CRIF	Central Road and Infrastructure Fund
CRRRI	Central Road Research Institute
CVC	Central Vigilance Commission
DFG	Demands for Grants
DGM	Deputy General Manager
DM	Deputy Manager
DPR	Detailed Project Report
DR	Direct Recruitment
DTC	Driving Training Centre
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
EEC	Electronic Engine Control
EI&ISC	Economic Importance and Inter-State Connectivity

EPC	Engineering, Procurement and Construction
ESCI	Engineering Staff College of India
EV	Electric Vehicle
FDR	Flood Damage Repairs
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FY	Financial Year
GATE	Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering
GIA	Grants-In-Aid
GM	General Manager
GSR	General Statutory Rule
GTE	Global Tender Enquiry
HAM	Hybrid Annuity Mode
IAHE	Indian Academy of Highway Engineers
ICAR	Indian Council of Agricultural Research
ICWA	Institute of Cost and Works Accountants
IDTR	Institute of Driver Training and Research
IEBR	Internal and External Budget Resources
IIP	Indian Institute of Petroleum
IISWC	Indian Institute of Soil and Water Conservation
IIT	Indian Institute of Technology
IRC	Indian Roads Congress
IRF	International Road Federation
IRQP	Improvement of Riding Quality Programme
IRTE	Institute of Road Traffic Education
IT	Information Technology
ITS	Intelligent Transportation System
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JRA	Japan Road Association
LA	Land Acquisition
LWE	Left Wing Extremism
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MDR	Major District Roads
MIV	Mobile Inspection Van
MMLP	Multi-Modal Logistics Park
MMS	Maintenance Management System
MoRTH/ MoRT&H	Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Madhya Pradesh
MSWIM	Medium Speed Weigh-in-Motion
MV	Motor Vehicles
NCLT	National Company Law Tribunal
NCT	National Capital Territory
NE	North-Eastern
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NH	National Highway

NHAI	National Highways Authority of India
NHDP	National Highways Development Project
NHIDCL	National Highway and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited
NHML	National Highways Logistics Management Limited
NIT	National Institute of Technology
NRSB	National Road Safety Board
NRSM	National Road Safety Month
OAE	Other Administrative Expense
ODR	Other District Roads
OFC	Optical Fiber Cable
OM	Office Memorandum
OPEX	Operational Expenses
OR	Ordinary Repairs
OS	Operating System
OTFIS	One Time Fund Infusion Scheme
PBFF	Permanent Bridge Fee Fund
PCRA	Petroleum Conservation Research Association
PCU	Passenger Car Unit
PG	Performance Grade
PIARC	Permanent International Association of Road Congresses
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PR	Periodic Renewals
PSU	Public Sector Undertaking
PWD	Public Works Department
RAP	Reclaimed Asphalt Pavement
RCD	Road Construction Department
RDTC	Regional Driving Training Centre
RE	Revised Estimates
RFP	Request for Proposal
RO	Regional Officer
ROW	Right of Way
RR	Recruitment Rules
RW	Roads Wing
SARD	Special Accelerated Road Development
SARDP	Special Accelerated Road Development Programme
SFC	Standing Finance Committee
SPV	Special Purpose Vehicle
SR	Special Repairs
SRD&Q	Standards, Research and Development & Quality
SWB	Static Weigh Bridge
TOT	Toll-Operate-Transfer
TPC	Total Project Cost
TSP	Tribal Sub-Plan
UI	User Interface

US	United States
UT	Union Territory
VG	Viscosity Grade
VGF	Viability Gap Funding
VR	Village Roads

REPORT

BRIEF BACKGROUND

An intricate, robust and well-maintained road network spanning the length and breadth of a country, acts as a fundamental enabler for its overall economic and social development by permitting efficacious movement of freight as well as passengers. Road transport handles bulk of countrywide passenger and freight traffic in India, while also complementing other modes of transport by providing and ensuring last-mile connectivity.

2. India has the second largest road network in the world of about 63.72 lakh kilometers, consisting of National Highways, Expressways, State Highways, Major District Roads, Other District Roads and Village Roads. The bifurcation of it is as under:-

National Highways	1,41,190 km
State Highways	1,70,844 km
Other Roads	60,59,813 km
Total	63,71,847 km

(As on 31st January, 2022)

3. The tasks and responsibilities of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) encompass, inter alia, construction and maintenance of National Highways (NHs); administration of the National Highways Act, 1956; National Highways Authority of India Act, 1988; National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008; Motor Vehicles Act, 1988; and Central Motor Vehicles Rules 1989, as also formulation of broad policies relating to road transport and automotive norms, besides making arrangements for movement of vehicular traffic with neighbouring countries.

4. The associated offices under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways are as follows:

I. National Highways Authority of India

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) was set up through an Act of Parliament, namely the National Highways Authority of India Act, 1988. The NHAI is responsible for the development, maintenance and management of the National Highways entrusted to it and for matters related or incidental thereto. The NHAI became operational in February, 1995.

II. National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. (NHIDCL)

The Cabinet, in its meeting held on 13.03.2014, approved the setting up and operationalization of a new corporate entity, the NHIDCL, under the Ministry to exclusively carry out the task of construction/ upgrading/widening of National Highways in parts of the country which share international boundaries with neighbouring countries in order to promote regional connectivity on a sustainable basis.

III. Indian Academy of Highway Engineers (IAHE)

The Indian Academy of Highway Engineers (IAHE) is a registered Society under the administrative control of the Ministry. It is a collaborative body which was set up in the year 1983 with the objective of fulfilling the long felt need for training of Highway Engineers in the country, both at the entry level and during their service period.

IV. Indian Road Congress (IRC)

The IRC was formally registered as a Society on 24th September 1937 under the Societies Registration Act of 1860 for periodical holding of road conferences to discuss issues related to road construction, maintenance & development. IRC has over 16,850 registered members comprising engineers & professionals of all Stakeholders of the road sector, from Central and State Governments; Public Sector; Research Institutions; Academic Institutions, Local bodies; Private sector; Concessionaires; Contractors; Consultants; Equipment manufacturers; Machinery manufacturers; Material producers & suppliers; Industrial Associations; and Multilateral & Institutional organizations like World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan Road Association (JRA), International Road Federation (IRF) etc.

V. National Highway Logistics Management Limited (NHLML)

The National Highways Logistics Management Limited (NHLML) is a 100% owned subsidiary company of NHAI. It is a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) company incorporated by the Ministry in the year 2020 with the intent of spearheading the development and inter-departmental coordination pertaining to the Multi-Modal Logistics Parks (MMLPs) for Cargo Traffic and first/last mile Port Connectivity Road projects under the Bharatmala Pariyojana. NHLML has also been delegated by the Ministry for development of other allied highway infrastructure such as Inter-modal Stations for passenger traffic and development operations and management of way-side amenities along National Highways, Utility corridor along National Highways. NHLML has been pivotal in accelerating the pace of coordination with State Governments and Partner Government Agencies in terms of on-boarding them as equity stakeholders for development of MMLPs and signing of MoUs with various agencies. Since its inception, the organization, under the supervision of Ministry, has prioritized action on fast tracking first/last mile direct road connectivity for various major and non-major ports and Inland Waterway Terminals under Bharatmala Pariyojana, in coordination with the Ministry of Ports, Waterways and Shipping and various Port agencies.

ANNUAL PLAN 2021-22

5. The Ministry has furnished the following details of the approved outlay for the Ministry for the year 2021-22 and the head-wise actual expenditure till 31st January, 2022:

(Amount in Rs. crore)

Sr. No.	Scheme	BE 2021-22	RE 2021-22	Expenditure upto January, 2022
	Roads Wing (RW)			
1	Externally Aided Projects	3750.00	4296.00	2410.46
2	Other Schemes	32723.00	36150.00	29968.76
a	NH (O)	32721.00	36148.00	29967.52

b	Travel Expenses, Machinery & Equipment	2.00	2.00	1.24
3	Development of IT	7.00	7.00	2.70
4	R&D and Training (a+b)	48.96	48.96	37.01
a	R&D Planning Studies	9.00	9.00	2.04
b	Training, Quality Assurance	30.00	30.00	28.96
c	Professional Services	9.96	9.96	6.01
5	Charged Expd.	10.00	10.00	1.81
6	NHAI (Investment)	57150.00	64860.00	51136.11
a	NHAI-Central Road and Infrastructure Fund	34500.00	39210.00	38486.11
b	NHAI-Toll Remittance, PBFF	12650.00	12650.00	12650.00
c	NHAI – Monetization of National Highways Fund	10000.00	13000.00	0.00
7	Bharatmala Pariyojana – work under State PWDs/NHIDCL/BRO etc	200.00	200.00	14.72
8	PBFF – Toll for States	20.07	20.07	0.05
9	Capital Outlay for N-E States	9590.00	10520.00	8105.11
a	SARDP-NE	4790.00	4825.00	3941.13
b	NH(O) for NE States	4800.00	5695.00	4163.98
10	Capital Outlay for development of road connectivity in LWE affected areas and other tribal areas	4207.00	4607.00	3070.62
a	LWE – Non TSP	80.00	80.00	64.83
b	LWE-TSP	250.00	250.00	212.39
c	Tribal Sub-Plan - NH works in NE States, Rajasthan, MP, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, etc.	3130.00	3530.00	2048.40

d	Ranchi Vijayawada corridor	2.00	2.00	0.00
e	Bharatmala Pariyojana –work under State PWDs/NHIDCL/BRO in Tribal Area	745.00	745.00	745.00
11	EI&ISC for States /UTs from CRF	300.00	295.00	272.61
12	Development of Ropeways	0.00	5.00	5.00
13	Maintenance of NHs including Swachhta Action Plan and PIARC	2660.08	2752.65	1863.42
	Total for Road Wing	110666.11	123771.68	96888.38
14	Road Transport	336.00	228.50	65.59
(A)	Total Central Sector Road	111002.11	124000.18	96953.97
(B)	Central Road Fund (CRF) for State Roads for State and UTs	6945.24	6995.24	4959.42
(C)	Secretariat Expenditure	153.65	153.65	112.04
	Grand Total	118101.00	131149.07	102025.43

6. The Committee observes that by January, 2022, the Ministry has managed to spend about 77.8 percent of the funds allocated to it at the Revised Estimates (2021-22) stage, which was about 11 percent more than the amount allocated to the Ministry at the Budget Estimates (2021-22) stage. While the Committee is pleased to note the overall pace of utilization of funds by the Ministry, a closer inspection shows that the utilization figures for several important heads viz., ‘Externally Aided Projects’, ‘Development of IT’, ‘R&D Planning Studies’, ‘Bharatmala Pariyojana - work under State PWDs/NHIDCL/BRO etc.’, ‘Maintenance of NHs including Swachhta Action Plan and PIARC’, ‘Tribal Sub-Plan - NH works in NE States, Rajasthan, MP, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, etc.’, and ‘Road Transport’ has been very low. All these heads are already receiving comparatively lower amount of funds, especially keeping in mind the vastness of the National Highways network in the country coupled with the discernible pattern of underutilization of funds under these

heads, the Committee feels that the Ministry's focus has been only on increasing the pace of construction of Highways and not so much on the other areas, which are equally important, if not more. Given the crucial role played by the activities carried out under these heads, for having a safe and pliable National Highways network across the country, the Committee is of the strong view that the Ministry should look into the reasons behind the underutilization of funds under these various key heads and resolve the bottlenecks, if any, in order to ensure optimal utilization of the limited budgetary resources available.

7. The Committee is especially concerned to note the extremely low expenditure made under the head Road Transport which has important sub-heads like 'Research, Training, Studies and Other Road Safety Schemes' and 'Scheme on Women Safety on Public Road Transport'. As against BE allocation of Rs. 336 crores, the RE allocation got reduced drastically to Rs. 228.50 crores, a reduction of about 32 percent. The Committee believes that this huge reduction at RE 2021-22 stage points to poor expenditure incurred under this head during the initial quarters by the Ministry. The fact that the Ministry has been able to spend a mere 28.7 percent of the funds allocated under this scheme till January, 2022 means that it did not take any remedial measures to rectify the issue of sub-optimal expenditure under this head. The Committee is of the firm view that the Ministry should introspectively look into the reasons behind this and take all necessary measures to ensure that the same does not repeat in the FY 2022-23.

8. The Ministry, in its Annual Report 2021-22, has stated that the year 2021-22 was a year for consolidating the gains that have accrued from major policy decisions taken in the previous six years, and aspiring to maintain the momentum of the historically highest pace of road development (about 37 km/day) achieved last year. The Ministry provided several relief measures to enable the highway sector to overcome the debilitating impact of the second wave of COVID-19. The monitoring of ongoing projects was intensified and critical interventions were made to resolve pending issues and bottlenecks. In order to provide a boost to infrastructure development and enable it to overcome the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry has set the highest ever target of 12,000 kms for award and 12,000 kms for construction for the year 2021-22. Overall road projects exceeding 64,000 km in length, costing more than Rs. 11 lakh

crore, are in progress out of which work in respect of projects of more than 40,000 km length has been completed and in balance length of more than 24,000 km works are in progress.

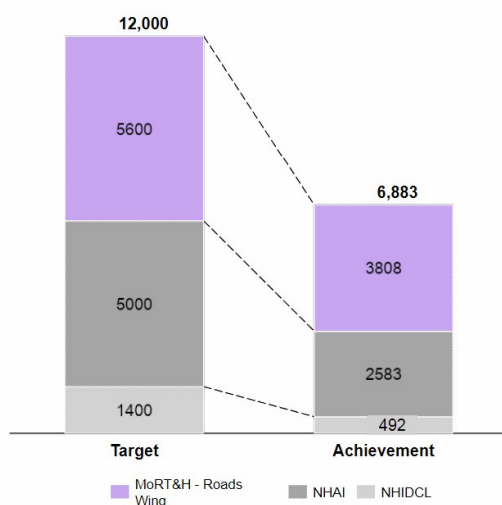
9. The Ministry, in its written reply, apprised the Committee that as against target of awarding 12,000 km length of NHs projects and completing construction of about 12,000 km length of NHs during FY 2021-22, projects in about 6,883 km length of NHs have been awarded and construction completed in about 6,684 km length upto month ending January, 2022. There has been some shortfall in achieving award and construction targets on account of initial set back due to effects of COVID-19 outbreak, prolonged monsoon in many parts of the country, etc.

10. The Ministry informed the Committee that no major saving / excess is being envisaged at this stage in any of the program / schemes except Monetization of National Highways Fund. No fund has been released / spent by NHAI under this head as projects under Toll Operate and Transfer (TOT) model are still in bidding process.

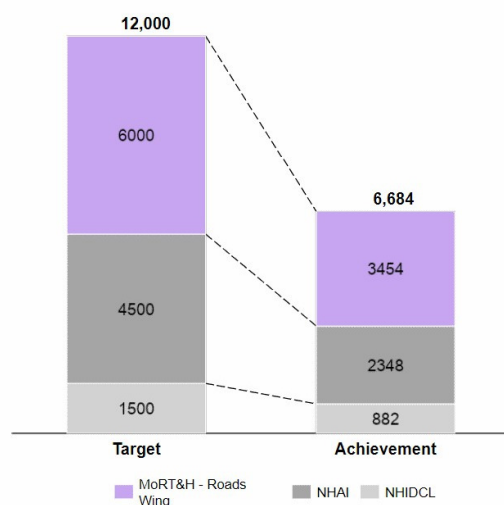
11. The Ministry, during its powerpoint presentation in the meeting of the Committee on the Demands for Grants (2022-23) of the Ministry, held on 16th February, 2022 informed the Committee that for FY21-22, about 56% of annual target of award & construction has been achieved till January, 2022 and is expected to reach its target of ~12,000 km by March, 2022.

For FY21-22, ~56% of annual target of award & construction achieved till Jan'22 and is expected to reach its target of ~12,000 km by Mar'22

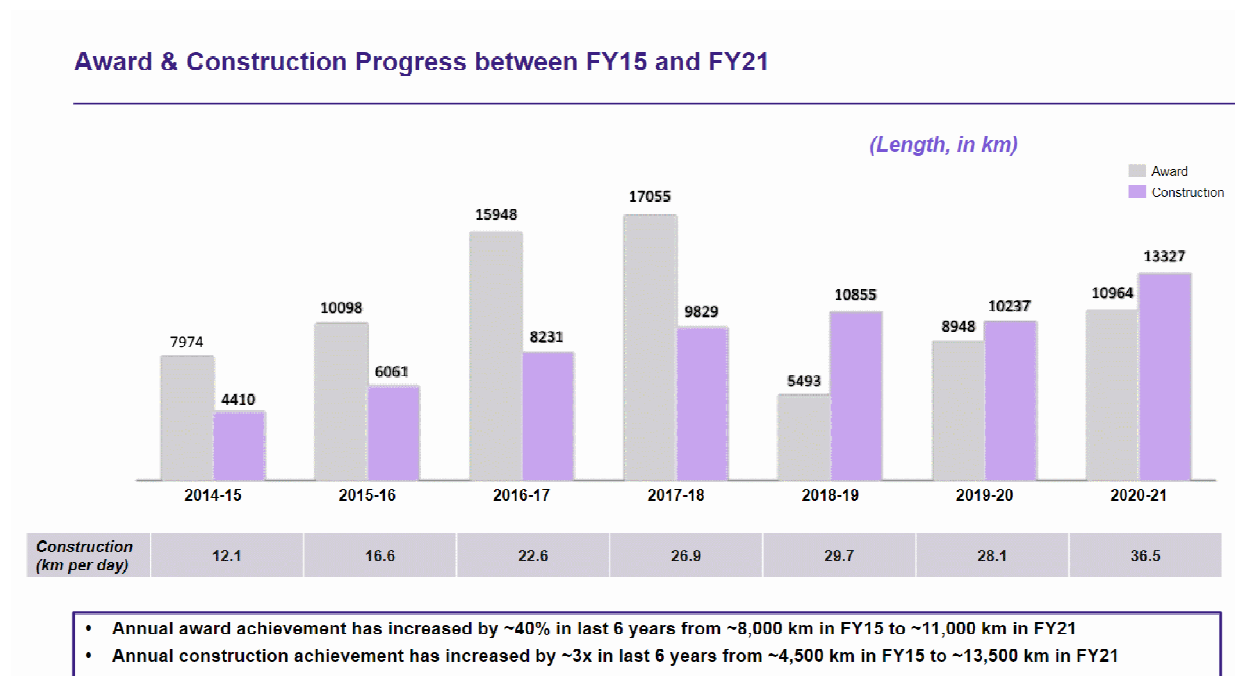
Award Target vs Achievement (till Jan'22) for FY22



Construction Target vs Achievement (till Jan'22) for FY22



12. The Ministry furnished the following information regarding the award and construction progress between FY15 and FY21:



13. The Committee is happy to note that the Ministry has made significant strides in terms of road length awarded and constructed each year, between the Financial Year 2014-15 and Financial Year 2020-21. The Committee hopes that the Ministry will strive to ensure that the pace of award and construction further increases in the coming years. However, in the ongoing Financial Year 2021-22, despite having spent about 77.8 percent of the allocation made to it at the RE Stage (till January, 2022), the Ministry has managed to achieve only about 56 percent of its targeted award and construction length. The Committee feels that the Ministry's targets regarding the award of projects and completion of construction length for the current Financial Year appear to be ambitious. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may look into the reasons behind falling short of achieving the targeted physical output for the ongoing Financial Year and resolve the issues thus identified so as to ensure that the targeted outputs are achieved in the FY 2022-23.

14. The Committee further feels that the Ministry needs to lay commensurate emphasis on road safety on NHs, proactive maintenance and repair of NHs and carrying out

researches and studies since doing so would make the rapidly expanding NH network across the country to be more cost-effective and safe and will also provide for speedy movement of the passengers as well as goods.

ANNUAL PLAN 2022-23

15. Program-wise projections made and the actual allocations proposed for the year 2022-23 is as under:

Annual Plan 2022-23			
(Amount in Rs. crore)			
Sr. No.	Scheme	Projected Demand for 2022-23	Budget Allocation
(1)	(2)		(3)
	Roads Wing (RW)		
1.	Externally Aided Projects	6,213.00	4,231.00
2.	Other Schemes	37,428.00	33,596.00
a	NH (O)	37,426.00	33,594.00
b	Travel Expenses, Machinery & Equipment	2.00	2.00
3.	Development of IT and Other charges	7.00	7.00
4.	R&D and Training (a+b)	49.00	79.00
a	R&D Planning Studies	9.00	9.00
b	Training, Quality Assurance	30.00	60.00

c	Professional Services	10.00	10.00
5.	Charged Expd.	10.00	5.00
6.	NHAI (Investment)	82,880.00	1,33,815.00
a	NHAI-Central Road and Infrastructure Fund	48,965.00	99,900.00
b	NHAI-Toll Remittance, PBFF	13,915.00	13,915.00
c	NHAI – Monetization of National Highways Fund	20,000.00	20,000.00
7.	Bharatmala Pariyojana – work under State PWDs and NHIDCL	500.00	200.00
8.	PBFF – Toll for States	5.62	5.62
9.	Capital Outlay for N-E States	12,100.00	10,565.00
a	SARDP-NE	5,350.00	4,840.00
b	NH(O) for NE States	6,750.00	5,725.00
10.	Capital Outlay for development of road connectivity in LWE affected areas and other tribal areas	5,250.00	4,595.00
a	LWE – Non TSP	50.00	50.00
b	LWE-TSP	220.00	220.00
c	Tribal Sub-Plan - NH works in NE States, Rajasthan, MP, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, etc.	4,180.00	3,575.00

d	Bharatmala Pariyojana in Tribal Area	800.00	750.00
11.	Development of Ropeways	100.00	100.00
12.	EI&ISC for States /UTs from CRF	250.00	250.00
13.	Maintenance of NHs including Swachhta Action Plan, PIARC	3,040.10	2,580.10
	Total for Road Wing	1,47,832.72	1,90,028.72
14.	Road Transport	393.55	356.00
(A)	Total Central Sector Road	1,48,226.27	1,90,384.72
(B)	Central Road Fund (CRF) for State Roads for State and UTs	8,995.05	8,559.76
(C)	Secretariat Expenditure	163.23	163.23
	Grand Total (A) + (B) + (C)	1,57,384.55	1,99,107.71

16. The Ministry informed the Committee that there was a demand of Rs. 1,57,384.55 crore and Rs. 60,000 crore as IEBR for the year 2022-23. Total fund allocated against this is Rs.1,99,107.71 crore and the proposed IEBR by NHAI has been fixed as Rs. 0.01 crore. No shortfall in fund and adverse effects thereof on any programme/ schemes are expected. Further, additional requirements (if any) shall be duly projected at RE stage for FY 2022-23.

17. The Committee is happy to note that against the projected demand of Rs. 1,57,384.55 crore made by the Ministry and Rs. 60,000 crore as IEBR, the Ministry has been allocated Rs. 1,99,107.71 crore, thus nullifying the need for raising funds through IEBR. Excluding allocation made under NHAI (Investment), however, the projected demand of the Ministry for the FY 22-23 was Rs. 74,504.55 crores, against which an allocation of Rs. 65292.71 has been made at B.E. 2022-23 stage, owing to substantial shortfall between the projected demand and allocation received for heads such as

‘Externally Aided Projects’, ‘NH(O)’, ‘Bharatmala Pariyojana – work under State PWDs and NHIDCL’, ‘Capital Outlay for N-E States’, ‘Capital Outlay for development of road connectivity in LWE affected areas and other tribal areas’, and ‘Maintenance of NHs including Swachhta Action Plan, PIARC’.

18. The Committee is surprised to note that although the overall demand of the Ministry was Rs. 2,17,384.55 crores (including IEBR) and the actual allocation made is Rs. 1,99,107.72 crores (including the nominal proposed IEBR amount of Rs. 0.01 crores), the Ministry has stated that there is no shortfall of fund and accordingly, no adverse effects thereof on any programme/scheme are expected. The Committee desires to know how the Ministry plans to tackle the shortfall between projected demand and allocation received under various heads. The Committee strongly recommends that the Ministry may request the Ministry of Finance to allocate more funds under the heads such as Externally Aided Projects, wherein there is a significant gap between the projected demand of the Ministry and the allocation received at B.E. 2022-23 stage.

19. The Committee may be apprised about the reasons for an allocation of only ₹ 200 crores under ‘Bharatmala Pariyojana – work under State PWDs and NHIDCL’ in B.E. 2022-23, as against the projected requirement of ₹ 500 crores.

20. Though the Committee welcomes the allocation of ₹ 60 crores in B.E. 2022-23 against the projected requirement of ₹ 30 crores under the head ‘Training, Quality Assurance’, the Committee desires to know how the Ministry plans to utilize the excess allocation.

21. The Committee strongly recommends that the Ministry may seriously consider upgrading and reviewing its road maintenance and road safety measures and schemes. Going by the paltry allocations made under the heads for road maintenance and road safety, the present focus of the Ministry seems to be only on the construction of new National Highways while the maintenance and safety aspects of the existing NH network in the country seems to get sidelined, as evident by the allocation of a mere 1.24 percent and 0.18 percent of the overall allocation respectively, for maintenance of NHs and road safety respectively. The Committee is of the considered view that the Ministry should come up with a robust long-term vision for improving the state of the existing NH network in the

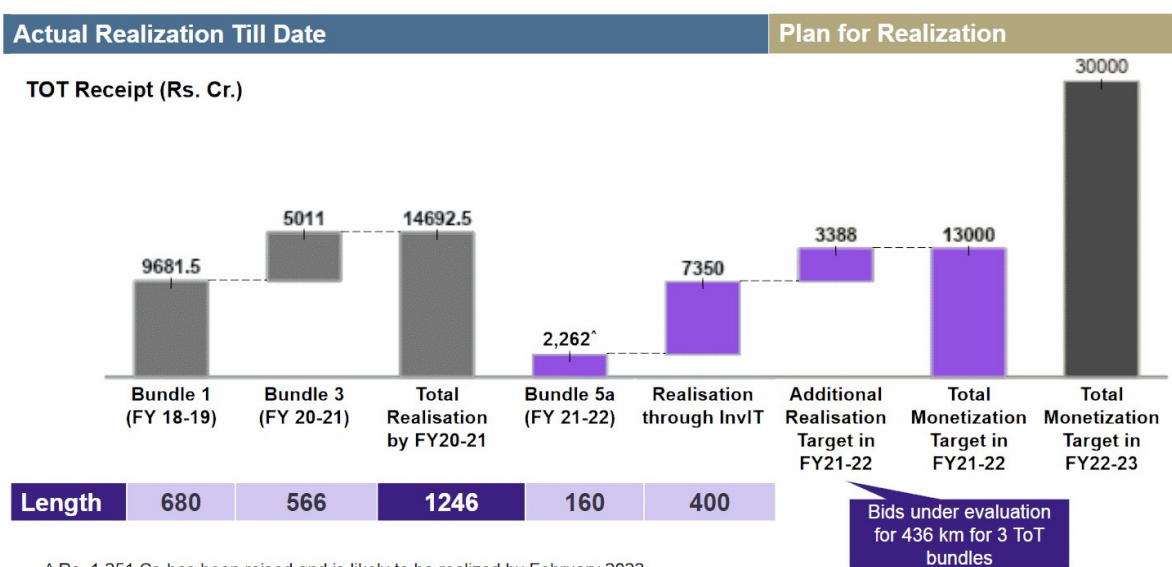
country by bolstering the allocation under these heads significantly in the coming years, as the present state of NHs across the country leave much to be desired.

22. The Ministry, in its powerpoint presentation on DFG (2022-23), has stated that the total funds available to it has increased about 5 times between FY14-15 and FY22-23 (BE), from Rs. 51,716 Crores to Rs. 2,54,108 Crores.

#	Year	Budgetary	IEBR	SPV	InvIT	Pvt. Investment	Total
1	2014-15	29,140	3,344	-		19,232	51,716
2	2015-16	45,726	23,281	-		29,770	98,777
3	2016-17	49,201	33,118	-		16,029	98,348
4	2017-18	59,636	50,533	-		16,501	1,26,670
5	2018-19	76,137	61,217	-		21,605	1,58,959
6	2019-20	75,857	74,988	-		21,926	1,72,771
7	2020-21	98,256	65,036			12,476	1,75,768
8	2021-22 (RE)	1,31,149	65,000	15,000	-	30,000	2,41,149
9	2022-23 (BE)	1,99,108	0.01	15,000	10,000	30,000	2,54,108

23. The Ministry furnished the following information regarding the monetization of National Highways across the country:

Monetisation of NHs :- Rs. 16,954 Cr has been raised through ToT so far and Rs. 7,350 Cr. has been realized through InvIT during 2021-22



* Rs. 1,251 Cr. has been raised and is likely to be realized by February 2022

24. The Committee is pleased to note the trend of increasing allocation to the Ministry, which underscores the importance being given to expanding and improving the National Highways network across the country. The Committee, however, notes that the Ministry has not been able to attract private investment at a similar pace. This is partly the reason for the high IEBR component in the last few years which is mainly why the huge debt burden is currently being faced by NHAI. The Committee appreciates that the IEBR component has been kept to a nominal Rs. 0.01 crore for FY 2022-23, with the Budgetary support made to the Ministry covering for the shortfall in the IEBR component. The Committee, however, feels that neither high budgetary support alone, nor high IEBR component will be able to suffice the investment requirements for the rapid pace of NH development across the country in the long run. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommends that the Ministry may work upon resolving the apprehensions of the private sector which are limiting their participation in the road infrastructure sector in the last few years, by working in close coordination with the concessionaires and financial institutions.

NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

25. The Ministry, in its written reply, stated that the projected expenditure of NHAI for FY 2022-23 is about Rs. 1,72,000 Crore. About Rs. 1,41,000 crore is expected to be met from the

Budgetary Outlay and balance fund requirement is to be met by raising funds through other sources like SPV, InvIT etc. The outlay shall be utilized by NHAI for meeting project expenses including costs for pre-construction activities, debt servicing repayment obligations, etc.

26. Details of funds released to NHAI and length constructed by NHAI in last 5 years is as under:-

(Length in km and amount in Rs. Crore)

Year / Head	NHAI-investment	Toll Remittances	Monetisation of NHs	NH(O)	Externally Aided projects of JICA and World Bank Studies	Maintenance and Repair of NHs	Total	Length constructed
2016-17	2,327	7,500		5,389		100	15,316	2588
2017-18	12,429	8,462		3,900	176	575	25,543	2993
2018-19	11,569	9,570	9,682		29	272	31,122	3264
2019-20	11,091	10,600	5,000	1,000	128	400	28,219	3979
2020-21	23,850	11,500	7,262	2,833	100	400	45,945	4218

27. The Committee notes that the amount of funds released to NHAI has almost tripled since FY 2016-17, while the length constructed by NHAI has increased by only about 63 percent during the same time period. This points to the rising cost of NH construction in the country, a major contribution is that of the steep rise in land acquisition costs. In this regard, the Committee desires to know the impact of the Value Capture Finance policy issued by NHAI, in partly financing the cost of highway construction and the response of the State Governments to the same. The Committee also recommends that the Ministry/NHAI may, as far as possible, try to factor in the rising costs of land acquisition in calculating the cost estimates for its future projects so as to enable accurate budgetary planning for the same. Further, the Ministry/NHAI may come up with ways to monetize the land assets which have been acquired but not been put to use for any possible reason.

NHAI Debt Servicing

28. The details of amount spent on debt service during the last 5 years and estimated to be spent in the upcoming 5 years are as follows:

Sl no.	FY	Amount used/required for debt servicing (in crore)
1	2016-17	6,193.73
2	2017-18	8,888.40
3	2018-19	14,402.72
4	2019-20	19,354.70
5	2020-21	25,496.67
6	2021-22	40,336.86
7	2022-23	31,048.63
8	2023-24	31,735.11
9	2024-25	30,600.76
10	2025-26	37,731.98

29. The Committee notes that the debt servicing cost of NHAI has been consistently increasing since FY 2021-22 and is expected to fall from the FY 2022-23 onwards, presumably because NHAI is proposed to raise just Rs. 1 lakh as IEBR component in the FY 2022-23. The Committee may be apprised of the reason for increase in the amount that is estimated by the Ministry to be spent on servicing NHAI debts during FY 25-26.

30. The Committee recommends that the Ministry/NHAI may take financial decisions with due long-term planning and ensure that NHAI debt levels stay within sustainable levels, aided in part by innovative financing and monetization of NH assets.

Vacancies in NHAI

31. At present, against the total sanctioned strength of 1892 posts, 1158 posts have been filled-up and 734 posts are vacant. The status and remedial measures taken in filling up the vacant posts in NHAI is submitted as under:-

- Out of the vacant posts, recruitment action for filling up 279 posts is already underway.
- For filling-up remaining vacant posts, recruitments are being undertaken by drawing detailed time-lines for filling-up each post. To ensure filling-up the vacant posts, a new

concept of rolling advertisement for inviting the applications for various posts available in the organisation throughout the year is under consideration.

- Besides these, about 320 Technical personnel have been engaged on contract basis to overcome the shortage of manpower in the Authority.
- Further, to meet the temporary requirement of Technical manpower, action for recruitment of about 200 Young Professional (Technical) based on GATE Scores has been initiated and the process is already underway.

32. With the above status and measures undertaken, it is expected to meet the manpower requirement for efficient usage of the enhanced allocation made in BE: 2022-23.

33. The sanctioned strength, incumbent position and vacancy status during the last 05 years is as under :-

Year	Sanctioned	In Position			Vacancy
		Regular	Deputation	Contract	
2017	1870	374	299	393	804
2018	1870	772	289	17	792
2019	1890	813	258	10	809
2020	1892	877	252	09	754
2021	1892	892	263	03	734

34. On the details sought by the Committee regarding the sanctioned strength and number of vacancies bifurcated into deputation and permanent posts at various levels, the Ministry stated that except in the Technical Cadre, no specific quotas have been prescribed in the NHAI RRs for deputation and permanent posts. Recently, in the newly formulated RRs of Finance Cadre, specific quotas for deputation and permanent posts upto level of DGM have been provided.

35. The Committee is highly distressed to note that despite the recommendations to the Ministry year after year, NHAI, with a budgetary allocation of Rs. 134,015 crores, is still operating with only 61.2 percent of its sanctioned strength. The Committee fails to understand how NHAI will be able to do justice to its mandate with more than a third of its

sanctioned strength being vacant. The Committee strongly recommends that the Ministry should take immediate measures to fill the vacancies in NHAI at shortest possible time.

36. It has come to the notice of the Committee that the first Recruitment Rules (RR) of NHAI had provisions for direct recruitment of officials up to General Manager (GM) level, both in Technical and Finance division. However, over time, these seats were commuted into promotion and deputation seats by removing the provision of direct recruitment from GM to Manager levels, which might be because of increased influence of officials on deputation in NHAI.

37. The Committee is of the view that commuting the Direct Recruitment posts to only promotion and deputation posts has caused a lot of difficulty in the efficient functioning of NHAI, especially in finance wing, as there is a dearth of candidates eligible for deputation because of various reasons, such as:

- a. NHAI follows Double Entry Accounting pattern whereas Government agencies follow Single Entry Accounting
- b. Disparity in pay scale as NHAI and PSUs follow different pay pattern
- c. Non-willingness of Central/State PSUs to spare their officials as they themselves face shortage of officials
- d. Ineligibility of internal candidates for promotion

38. The Committee observes that because of these issues, an Expert Committee was formed to redress the issue and Draft Recruitment Rules, 2017 were formulated re-introducing the provision for Direct Recruitment upto DGM level in Finance cadre, by reducing quota for deputation and promotion for three years until equilibrium was reached in the hierarchy. It has come to the notice of the Committee that lobbies of deputation officials working in NHAI got the provisions changed before the draft RR could be placed for board approval and in the end, only changes made in the new RR were linguistic and a reduction of promotion time period from 5 years to 4 years. In this regard, the Committee recommends that the Ministry may furnish details regarding the exact changes made in the existing RR by the Expert Committee in 2017.

39. The Committee took up this issue in its 296th Report on ‘Role of Highways in Nation Building’. In the Action Taken Replies furnished by the Ministry on the 296th Report of the Committee, it has been observed that a large number of vacancies exist in NHAI from Deputy Manager level to GM level in Finance cadre, which implies that NHAI is mostly functioning with Junior Accountants and Young Professionals (YP) who neither have appropriate educational qualifications nor experience, but are handling thousands of crores of public money possibly serving the vested interests of the contractors. The Committee further notes that despite several advertisement for deputation in Finance wing, no applications were received for eligible candidates and NHAI kept rolling on the advertisement.

40. The Committee is surprised to note that in para 5.1 of Chapter III of the 307th Report of the Committee, NHAI has clearly indicated various problems in recruiting officials under deputation quota, but still NHAI frames policy for recruitment under deputation only. It may also be noted that under para 5.2 of Chapter III of that Report, NHAI has replied that review of Finance cadre RR was recently done and accordingly, new advertisement has been made. The Committee may be apprised of the various changes made in the RR after this review.

41. In para 6.1 of Chapter III of the 307th Report of the Committee, NHAI has mentioned that while vacancies from CGM to Deputy Manager in Finance cadre range from 50 percent to 90 percent, the employee strength is maximum at Junior Accountant level. The Committee fails to understand how an organization managing public money to the tune of lakhs of crores rupees can be run through Junior Accountants, with huge vacancies existing at higher levels. In para 9.1 and para 9.2 of the abovementioned Report, it has been stated that direct recruitment above Deputy Manager level will lead to loss of promotion avenues to the Junior Accountants. In this regard, the Committee feels that since at present, promotion seats are 50 percent whereas deputation seats are 50 percent as well, for which NHAI is not able to receive any eligible applications, NHAI may fill the deputation seats through direct recruitment, for which eligible and efficient officials at lower level can apply as well, further improving their promotion prospects.

42. In this regard, it is further observed that Railways has its own cadre because huge funds are involved, so a responsible cadre is required and outsiders at such lower level who will come for few years and go, cannot be relied upon with huge financial stake, in view of accountability issues. It may also be noted that all Central PSUs, whether ONGC, PFC, GAIL, SAIL etc., recruit around 35 percent of their officials on direct basis at all levels, to have experienced candidates from the market and bring equilibrium in the system, also helping eligible internal candidates to rise to higher ranks.

43. In view of the above, the Committee recommends that the following suggestion may be considered with the permissible framework of NHAI:

- a. NHAI needs to amend and improve the way it is being run at present. It should take appropriate steps to ensure that it is not managing its huge budgetary allocation through Junior Accountants alone, with a drastic number of vacancies existing at higher levels.**
- b. RRs for Technical and Financial cadres were amended together in the past but now NHAI is revisiting amendment in technical cadre alone but not in Finance cadre, giving the reason that the amendment in Finance cadre RRs was recently done, which is contradictory. NHAI should bring transparency in its policy formulation.**
- c. A committee may be set up comprising senior officials of relevant discipline, to formulate new RRs for filling up all posts presently under deputation mode, via Direct Recruitment, taking provision of three years which will generate equilibrium in the hierarchy of the cadre by filling all such posts.**
- d. NHAI should correct the blunder it has made by correlating B.Com. with higher qualifications like CA/ICWA/MBA(F) in its eligibility for Deputation Mode, since it was unable to get enough applications for highly qualified candidates under the Deputation Mode earlier. Having a**

workforce with higher qualifications and experience will help NHAI utilize its budgetary allocation in a more efficient manner.

- e. With Direct Recruitment, the stay of Orissa High Court for not recruiting on Deputation mode can be got vacated and eligible internal candidates can also apply for these DR posts.**
- f. Since the education qualification of already recruited candidates in Finance is only B.Com. with no requisite qualification and experience, their higher promotions should not be done blindly, rather it should be as per their efficiency and acquiring higher qualifications.**
- g. Till new Recruitment Rules are framed to resolve these issues, all present advertisements may be put into abeyance.**

44. The Committee feels that NHAI can resolve a lot of issues with these amendments and bring transparency and efficiency in its system.

Standards, Research and Development & Quality (SRD&Q) Division, NHAI

45. NHAI is incurring expenditure on Standards, Research and Development & Quality (SRD&Q) from the overall budgetary support given to NHAI and money raised through IEBR and SPV. However, NHAI has earmarked Rs. 50 crore for the R&D activities to be taken up with IITs, NITs & Research Institutions.

45 A. Research Studies undertaken by NHAI so far are as under: -

Sl. No.	Research Area	Institute	Cost (Rs. Lakh)
1	Exploring Eco-Friendly Civil Engineering Techniques for Disposal of Plastic Waste	NIT Warangal	19.28
2	Evaluation of Impact of Electronic Toll Collection System on Vehicular Emissions in India	IIT Delhi	24.00

3	Development of Performance based mix design process	IIT (BHU) Varanasi	91.21
4	Superpave Performance Grade (PG) and Durability Characterization of Unmodified Viscosity Grade (VG) Bitumen	IIT Bombay	77.70
5	Development of Methodical Approach to Incorporate the Effect of Vehicle Type in IRC:37-2018 performance Prediction Models	IIT Tirupati	68.35
6	Mitigation strategy to counter top-down cracking due to non-uniform contact stresses in Flexible Pavements	BITS (Pilani) Hyderabad	26.50
7	Feasibility study (lab and field) of using higher RAP content in base course as well as wearing courses in bituminous pavement	CRRI Delhi	168.28
8	Development of High strength and fast curing Cementitious stabilised base layer	CRRI Delhi	53.16
9	Noise vibration control, light proofing (Privacy control) for wildlife and noise barrier design.	CRRI Delhi	96.00
10	Utilization of rice husk Ash, Bagasse Ash and Bottom Ash as Backfill Materials for Highway Embankment	IIT Ropar	53.39
11	Slope monitoring and landslide hazard quantification for Hilly Roads	IIT Ropar	78.33
12	Utilisation of Inferior Quality Aggregates in Hot, Warm & Cold Mix Asphalt	IIT Jammu	52.65

13	Development of Decision support system for Maintenance Management of National Highways	NIT Trichy	68.86
14	Developing Vegetation based technologies for dust and erosion control along National Highways proposal from ICAR	ICAR-IISWC	56.91

46. The Committee feels that the SRD&Q Division should be more active in the field of research in the road sector and utilize the vast troves of data available with NHAI to come up with solutions presently stifling the usability and effectiveness of the NH network in the country. Research activities to be undertaken should be planned in advance with inputs from both within and outside NHAI regarding the bottlenecks/difficulties that need to be addressed in the road sector in India, taking cues from international best standards. Special budgetary provisions should be made to fund such researches/studies which will try to address the aforesaid pain-points. The Committee recommends that the Ministry/NHAI may recruit an eminent researcher in the field as the head of the SRD&Q Division so that overall R&D activities carried out can be monitored well in the road infrastructure sector by the Ministry.

Sukhad Yatra Smartphone Application

47. The year-wise number of complaints received on Sukhad Yatra App is provided as below:-

Year	No. of Complaints received
2018	333
2019	242
2020	60
2021	272

2022 (as on date in January)	40
------------------------------------	----

48. The Ministry submitted that based on the time taken to resolve/close various complaints, the average time taken for resolution is 26 days (approx.).

49. In response to a query raised by the Committee, the Ministry informed that as per existing functionalities developed, there is no feedback/confirmation being sought from the complainant after the issue is resolved by the concerned NHAI office. The Ministry further stated that notwithstanding above, there is a functionality in the App to rate the services of NHAI (1 star to 5 star ratings) and also comment in terms of toll plaza experience, riding experience, civic amenities on Highways etc.

50. In last one year, various initiatives have been undertaken to improve the user experience of Sukhad Yatra App as below:-

- The usage of Google Map APIs (Application Programming Interface) extended to pay-as-you-use basis in a month to allow unhindered usage by users
- Updated version of the App available in both iOS and Android platform with improved User Interface (UI)
- Additional new options under “Report an Issue” section such as Report an accident (automatically dials to NH Helpline 1033 on clicking the Option), Report non-availability/non-cleaning of Toilets at Toll Plaza, Others, etc.
- Regular update of all NH fee plazas, toll rates etc.
- Moreover, MoRTH has also constituted a Committee to suggest improvements in the existing App.
- Discussions are underway with IIT (Indian Institute of Technology), Madras for guidance to upscale and improve the functioning and develop a holistic Mobile App.

51. The Committee is concerned to note that the number of complaints received via the Sukhad Yatra application has not shown any uptick since 2018. The Committee is of the considered view that wide adoption of the application can help NHAI gain free actionable

information regarding the issues being faced by NH users across the country, which can be quickly acted upon, thus ensuring a well-maintained and safe driving experience on the NHs. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry may work upon improving the usability of the Sukhad Yatra smartphone application at the earliest and come up with innovative means to promote the application to NH users across the country. An option to seek feedback from the person posting a complaint using the app, may also be added so as to gain insight into whether the problem pointed out by the complainant has actually been resolved or not.

DELAYED ROAD PROJECTS

52. The Ministry informed the Committee that several critically delayed projects have been completed during the last 7 years. Out of total 110 NHs languishing projects in about 9,250 km length entailing estimated investments of more than Rs. 1,77,000 crore, 54 projects have been completed in about 3,680 km length costing about Rs. 49,000 crore with policy interventions such as One Time Fund Infusion Scheme (OTFIS), substitution, suspension, regular monitoring, review and corrective action, etc.; 49 projects in about 4,970 km costing about Rs. 1,13,000 crore are in various stages of progress and are targeted for completion by FY 2023-24.

53. About 68 no. of projects are delayed for a length of 1933 km costing about Rs. 13,600 crore. Out of this, about 1521 km has been completed and only 413 km is pending for completion. State-wise details of these projects are as under.

Sr. No.	State	No.	Total Length (km)	TPC	Length Completed (km) upto Jan 22	Pending Length
1	Assam	3	79	597	76	3
2	Bihar	1	67	2128	50	17
3	Chhattisgarh	15	657	1197	347	311

4	Himachal Pradesh	1	0	11	0	0
5	Kerala	1	28	705	27	2
6	Maharashtra	2	225	1153	202	23
7	Mizoram	4	192	2241	166	26
8	Odisha	2	114	272	111	2
9	Rajasthan	1	226	1539	223	3
10	Telangana	2	44	252	41	2
11	Uttar Pradesh	1	180	2017	171	8
12	West Bengal	1	123	1495	107	16
Total		34	1933	13606	1521	413

54. The Ministry further submitted that all these are fixed contracts / concessions, however, the cost of such delays on the exchequer is limited to the escalation paid to the contractors / concessionaires. Generally, projects are delayed due to site/ local/ project specific factors attributable to either Authority or Contractor/ Concessionaire or both or *Force Majeure* reasons. Delays in land acquisition, pre-construction activities, law and order issues, Contractors’/ Concessionaires’ cash flow problems, poor performance of Contractors/Concessionaires, etc. are common reasons for project delays and time overrun.

55. The Government has taken several initiatives for completing the delayed projects, such as streamlining Land Acquisition (LA), expediting fulfilment of Government obligations for condition precedents, one-time fund infusion, premium re-scheduling, securitization of road sector loans, rationalized exit for equity investors, termination/foreclosure and re-bidding, revamping the dispute resolution system, rationalized compensation for delays attributed to Authority, regular meetings and reviews at various levels with all stakeholders including the State Governments, project developers, Contractors/Concessionaires, notification of Guiding Principles for Resolution of Stuck Projects aiming at foreclosure of projects which are stuck on account of the concessionaire/contractor in NCLT (National Company Law Tribunal) or mutual default of both Authority and Contractor/Concessionaire, providing various COVID-19 relief measures under Atmanirbhar Bharat, etc.

56. The Committee is concerned to note that a lot of road projects across the country are delayed at present. The Committee notes the various reasons enumerated by the Ministry behind the delays in the projects, and the steps being taken by the Ministry for completing the delayed projects. Road infrastructure project delays are always accompanied by cost overruns, besides causing a lot of trouble and loss of time to NH commuters. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommends that the Ministry/NHAI may review the road project monitoring mechanism and strengthen the same in order to keep a track on the progress of road projects at every stage and remedial measures may be taken wherever delays are apparently noticed at the earliest.

57. The Committee notes that a Corridor Rating Methodology¹ for project management and accountability has been devised by NHAI. The Committee reiterates the recommendation it has previously made in para 22 of its 296th Report on ‘Role of Highways in Nation Building’ regarding creation of a central database of National Highways rating scores, including the ones executed by State PWDs, and further recommends that those parameters in the Corridor Rating Methodology which pertain to the performance of road contractors, may be utilized to adjudge their overall performance based on all the road projects they have worked on across the country. The Committee feels that a lot of projects get delayed because of poor performance of contractors and recommends that some weightage may be given to the past performance of road contractors, in terms of timely completion and quality construction, during the process of awarding of road projects.

58. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may conduct regular meetings with concerned State Government officials in order to ensure that the land acquisition process for all road projects stays on track. The Committee desires to be apprised of the steps taken by the Ministry to minimize the delays sometimes caused in road projects on account of State Governments’ lethargic approach to land acquisition for the project.

¹ Source: https://nhai.gov.in/nhai/sites/default/files/policy_circular/Highway_Rating_Report_NHAI.pdf

PENDING ARBITRATION CASES

59. The Ministry submitted the following year-wise details (last 5 years) regarding the number of arbitration cases pending, amount involved in such pending arbitration cases, number of arbitration cases settled so far is as under.

S. No.	Year	Number of Pending Arbitration Matters (Year wise)	Amount of Claims (in Rs. Cr.)	Amount of Counter Claims (in Rs. Cr.)	Matter Under Conciliation	Matters Reserved for Award
1	2017	10	13,064.29	1,035.79	0	4
2	2018	13	3,700.278	2,106.523	1	5
3	2019	25	17,614.6	8,991.595	4	5
4	2020	35	28,289.299	9,232.964	11	4
5	2021	30	25,054.8	17,854.3	5	0
6	2022	9	377.651	0	0	0
		122	88,100.918	39,221.172	21	18
Total No of cases settled so far (last 05 Years)- 48, Settled amount Rs 6,101 Cr against Claims of Rs 16,733 Cr						

60. With regard to the present mechanism available to settle arbitration cases in NHAI, the Ministry submitted that NHAI has made an effort to settle the disputes between the Parties, through an effective mechanism which has been adopted in NHAI vide Policy Circular Dated 02.06.2017 to establish a Conciliation & Settlement Mechanism for Contractual disputes under Contract agreement through a Panel of Independent Experts comprising Retired Judges, bureaucrats and reputed persons from the industry having expertise in Infrastructure known as Conciliation Committee of Independent Experts (CCIE). Three Committees have been constituted to expedite the Conciliation. Further, NHAI has also framed a Policy Guidelines dated 06.03.2020 in terms of MoRTH letter No. 35014/39/2019-H dated 14.02.2020 and OM No. 14070/14/2016-PPPAU dated 28.11.2019 of NITI Aayog. NHAI, *vide* the above mentioned Policy Guidelines seeks opinion of Law Officers-Attorney General/Solicitor General/Addl. Solicitor General of India in consultation with the Department of Legal Affairs (DoLA), before challenging the award.

61. The Committee takes note of the present mechanism available to settle arbitration cases in NHAI and feels that the same needs to be further strengthened since the amount of claims pending under arbitration has risen to Rs. 88,100 crores, which is a worrisome figure. The Committee feels that the process of arbitration should be sufficiently quick so as to ensure that road projects do not get stuck. NHAI may consider constituting a higher number of CCIEs if it is felt that doing so would allow faster, parallel processing of the pending arbitration cases.

BHARATMALA PARIYOJANA PHASE-I

62. The Ministry, in its Annual Report 2020-21, informed that the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved the implementation of an umbrella programme for the National Highways – “Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase-I” in its meeting held on 24th October 2017, for construction/ up-gradation of National Highways of 34,800 kms length over a period of 5 years (2017-18 to 2021-22) at an estimated outlay of Rs. 5,35,000 Crore. The programme focuses on optimizing efficiency of freight and passenger movement across the country by bridging critical infrastructure gaps through effective interventions like development of Economic Corridors, Inter Corridors and Feeder Routes, National Corridor Efficiency Improvement, Border and

International Connectivity roads, Coastal and Port Connectivity roads and Green-field expressways. Multi-modal integration is also built into this program. Special attention has been paid to fulfilling the connectivity needs of backward and tribal areas, areas of economic activity, places of religious and tourist interest, border areas, coastal areas and trade routes with neighbouring countries.

63. Under Phase I of Bharatmala Pariyojana, which is the flagship scheme to construct 34,800 km of National Highways with a total cost of Rs. 5.35 Lakh Cr, total 20,632 km length has been awarded for construction and 7,375 km of road length has already been constructed till Dec'22.

(Amount in Rs. Cr., Length in km)

Classification	Awarded & Approved		Balance for Approval		Total	
	Length	Cost	Length	Cost	Length	Cost
Economic Corridors	6,123	2,04,223	4,613	1,53,468	10,736	3,57,692
Inter-corridor Roads	2,165	46,611	2,032	41,523	4,197	88,134
Feeder Roads	609	21,136	930	16,993	1,539	38,128
National Corridor	1,709	60,542	132	7,457	1,841	67,999
National Corridor Efficiency Program	738	37,241	531	15,206	1,270	52,447
Border Roads	1,350	8,871	54	277	1,404	9,148
International Connectivity Roads	80	2,556			80	2,556
Coastal Roads	77	1,171	606	14,927	683	16,099
Port Connectivity	174	1,351	469	12,098	643	13,449
Expressways	2,322	1,50,074	86	7,727	2,409	1,57,801
BM Total	15,347	5,33,776	9,453	2,69,676	24,800	8,03,452

Residual NHDP	5,285	1,17,911	4,714	1,42,334	10,000	2,60,245
BM + NHDP	20,632	6,51,687	14,167	4,12,010	34,800	10,63,697
Terminated Projects	578				-	
Total BM	21,210	6,51,687	14,167	4,12,010	34,800	10,63,697

64. The Ministry informed that the construction of Phase 1 of Bharatmala Pariyojana is expected to be completed by FY27.

65. The Committee is deeply concerned to note that though the original timeline for Bharatmala Phase-I targeted its completion by 2021-22, only 20,632 km (59.28% of total) has been awarded while only 7,375 km (21.19% of total) has been constructed by December, 2022 out of the overall target of 34,800 km. This has led to the targeted timeline for completion now being estimated at FY27 while the estimated cost of BMP Phase-I has almost doubled from Rs. 5.35 lakh crores to Rs. 10.63 lakh crores. Considering that the Ministry has managed to construct only about 21.19% of the Phase-I length during more than four years since the inception of the scheme, the Committee is of the view that the targeted completion estimate of FY27 will prove to be a great challenge to the Ministry. Given the direct correlation between delays on project cost and the positive ripple effects that the timely completion of BMP Phase-I will have on several inter-linked economic sectors, it is necessary that the Ministry undertakes all-out measures to ensure that the revised target for completion of BMP Phase-I is met and the bottlenecks being faced by the Ministry in the execution of Phase-I so far may be proactively ironed out.

66. The Ministry, in its written reply, informed the Committee that 9 Port Connectivity projects in about 161 km have been completed under Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase-I. 4 projects are under development. The Ministry submitted that there has been no delay on its part for implementation of the Port Connectivity Projects under Bharatmala Pariyojana and added that the Ministry and NHAI have been persistently interacting with concerned State Governments, Port Authorities, etc., for finalizing modalities of implementation of Projects. NHAI has set up a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) named National Highways Logistics Management Limited (NHLML) for this purpose. Further dedicated funding under Bharatmala Pariyojana has also been made for Port connectivity projects. There are several issues concerning availability of

ROW (Right of Way) for these projects (which are not NHs), habitations along the alignments & encroachments, land acquisition, signing of MOUs (Memorandum of Understanding) by Port Authorities, finalization of mechanism for recovery of costs, etc. However, concerted efforts are being made for time bound implementation of the projects.

67. The Ministry has prioritized additional 56 Port connectivity projects in about 1,880 km length based on priorities of the Ministry of Shipping. Out of these, 5 projects of length 105 km have been awarded; 4 projects of length of 992 km are being developed under other components of Bharatmala Pariyojana; action has been taken for finalizing DPRs for 47 projects (783 km).

68. The Committee is not satisfied with the response of the Ministry with regard to delays in Port Connectivity Projects under BMP Phase-I wherein it has stated that there has been no delay on its part for implementation of the same. The Committee understands that these projects require coordination with State Governments, Port Authorities etc. but it is still disappointing to note that the length of port connectivity projects awarded and approved so far is just 174 kms out of the 643 kms (i.e., 27.06%) planned under BMP Phase-I. It is pertinent to note that this is considerably behind the overall progress of 59.28% of BMP Phase-I, which in itself is running way behind schedule. The Committee strongly recommends that the Ministry may undertake a review of the coordination mechanism presently in place for execution of the port connectivity projects, identify the bottlenecks and take immediate measures to resolve the issues thus identified, since poor connectivity to ports is a significant bottleneck in itself, to the growth of the Indian Shipping sector.

MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF NATIONAL HIGHWAYS

69. Regarding the mechanism in place to carry out maintenance of National Highways across the country, the Ministry, in its written reply, informed the Committee that the various types of M&R works undertaken on NHs are Ordinary Repairs (OR), Periodic Renewals (PR), Special Repairs (SR) and Emergent/ Flood Damage Repairs (FDRs). The M&R of NH stretches are carried out for the stretches not covered under any programme or completed stretches where there are no liabilities of contractors to maintain such stretches. The Ministry has undertaken

separate initiatives for strengthening Quality Control set up for NHs projects. Independent Quality Monitors are being engaged by NHA and NHIDCL to check the quality of implementation of projects including the stretches where maintenance work is going on. The Ministry has taken initiatives to procurement of services for supply, operation and maintenance of Mobile Inspection Vans (MIVs) equipped with non-destructive testing equipment for Quality Inspection of NHs projects; bids have been invited in January, 2022 for procuring services through one MIV in each of the States of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Odisha on pilot basis. Periodic quality checks are intended to be carried out through these MIVs on projects being implemented through all executing agencies such as NHA, NHIDCL, State PWDs/ RCDs, etc., towards institutionalizing Quality Control system for NHs projects.

70. The Ministry, in its written reply, informed the Committee that funds for Maintenance and Repair (M&R) of NHs under Revenue head has been reduced from Rs. 2,620.00 crore under BE 2021-22 to Rs. 2,480 crore under BE 2022-23. However, it is pertinent to mention that a major amount of the fund for M&R of NHs were earlier being spent for PR / IRQP works. Considering limited available funds annually for M&R of NHs under Revenue head, the Ministry is now earmarking allocation of funds for PR / IRQP works under Capital head under NH(O). Therefore, effectively the shortfall in fund availability under Revenue head for M&R of NHs has been fully met and no shortfall of funds are anticipated under these schemes in FY 2022-23.

71. The Ministry apprised the Committee that excluding about 9,300 km length of NHs yet to be entrusted to agencies for undertaking development and maintenance works, tentative length of NHs under maintenance and repair are about 27,000 km and these are not under the liability of other Contractors. Year-wise details of fund demanded, actual fund received and expenditure incurred under the head Maintenance and repair for the years 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 is given as under:

(Amount Rs. in crore)

Year	Fund demanded	Actual Fund received (RE stage)	Expenditure incurred
2017-18	8,500	2875.75	2578.68
2018-19	8,500	2531.18	1697.17
2019-20	6,500	2000.00	1593.56

2020-21	5,000	2653.92	2660.46
2021-22	5000	2712.50	1862.57 (upto January, 2022)

72. The Committee enquired from the Ministry about the existing mechanism at present to identify potholes, pruning of trees/bushes and other maintenance requirements on the National Highways network across the country. The Ministry, in its written reply, informed the Committee that field officers at site identify regular maintenance requirements based on their inspections and take up necessary action for filling of pot-holes and other maintenance activities as per the site requirement. The use of Network Survey Vehicle has been initiated to estimate road conditions. The Ministry further stated that the broad policy is to complete maximum quantum of maintenance & repair works to rectify defects before onset of monsoon so that damages during monsoon are minimized.

73. The Committee notes from the reply of the Ministry that about 9,300 km length of NHs is yet to be entrusted to agencies for undertaking development and maintenance works, whereas the tentative length of NHs under maintenance and repair are about 27,000 km and these are not under the liability of other Contractors. The Committee understands that for the time being, about 36,300 km of NHs is being maintained and repaired using the funds available under the head ‘Maintenance and Repair (M&R) of NHs’, which is about 25.71 percent of the overall 1,41,190 km NH network of the country. The Committee further notes that the budget allocated under this head is a paltry Rs. 2,480 crore for the FY 22-23, which is only about 1.24 percent of the overall BE 2022-23 allocation of Rs. 199,107.71 crores.

74. In this regard, the Committee observes that in ‘Strategy for New India @ 75’², NITI Aayog has enlisted the following point as one of the ways forward for improvement of road maintenance and safety:

Maintain NH assets by adopting a maintenance management system (MMS). Earmark funds from the Central Road Fund (CRF) for maintenance activities. India should

² https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2019-01/Strategy_for_New_India_2.pdf

begin with earmarking 10 percent of its annual budget for road and highways for maintenance to move towards the developed country norm of earmarking 40 per cent to 50 per cent of the budget for roads and highways for maintenance.

75. Further, the Committee notes that allocation made for maintenance of Highways pales in comparison with that in developed countries like United States, where the allocation made for maintenance of Federal Highways is more than 50 percent of the overall budget of the Federal Highway Administration³. While the Committee appreciates the fact that budgetary allocation for the highway network of a developed economy like United States cannot directly be compared with that of India, which needs to expand its National Highway network at a rapid pace, the concentration on expansion of the NH network alone cannot be permitted to sideline the need for high-quality maintenance of the existing NH network in the country. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry should carry out an overhaul of the existing mechanism for inspection and monitoring of maintenance & repair requirements on National Highways across the country. Given the poor state of National Highways often observed around the country and the direct adversary effect of the same on road safety as well as average speed of the traffic, it is imperative that the Ministry/NHAI may put in efforts to ensure that routine M&R activities are carried out on National Highways in a proactive manner, without waiting for the NHs to reach conditions that would require immediate intervention. The Committee, with a view to effectuate the same, recommends that a mechanism may be developed to quantify the condition of all NH stretches in an objective manner, using international standards as a benchmark for such quantification.

76. The Committee is of the considered view that in order to lay such concentrated focus on the conditions of NHs across the country, the Ministry needs to earmark a much higher amount of allocation of funds for the Maintenance and Repair of National Highways. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommends that the Ministry may re-evaluate its budgetary requirements under this head in order to materialize the enhanced focus on maintaining the existing NH network in the country in excellent condition, as suggested by the Committee in its recommendation at para 73 above.

³ https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/cfo/fhwa-fy-2021_budget_508.pdf

77. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may look into the issue of waterlogging on National Highways in areas with heavy rainfall or flood-prone areas, since the same not only slows the movement of passengers and goods but also poses significant road safety risks. Necessary corrective measures may immediately be taken on the NHs facing waterlogging issues and research may be conducted to look into tackling the issue from the initial design and construction stage of new NH projects.

SPECIAL ACCELERATED ROAD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (SARDP) FOR NORTH EASTERN AREAS

78. The Ministry has dedicated Special Accelerated Road Development Programme for North-East (SARDP-NE) and has spent Rs. 44,961 Cr. under the scheme till Dec'21. The scheme is being taken up in 2 parts. Phase A of SARDP-NE has identified a length of 4,007 km to be taken up. Out of the 4,007 km, 3,654 km has been awarded and the balance 353 km will be awarded shortly. Out of the 3,654 km awarded, 2,869 km has already been completed. Arunachal Pradesh Package: 1,991 km of roads have been identified to be taken up in Arunachal Pradesh for increasing strategic connectivity of the State. Projects have been awarded for the entire 1,991 kms and 1,196 km has been completed.

79. Initially, it was targeted to complete/ SARDP-NE Phase-A & Arunachal Pradesh Package of SARDP-NE by March, 2014. However completion of projects/Scheme is delayed mainly due to following:

- (i) Land Acquisition;
- (ii) Less working season;
- (iii) Non-availability of local Agencies;
- (iv) Scarcity of good quality quarry materials/Aggregates;
- (v) Poor performance of contractors.

80. SARDP-NE Phase-A and Arunachal Pradesh Package is targeted to be completed by 2023-24.

81. The Committee is anguished to note that the SARDP-NE Phase-A and Arunachal Pradesh Package was initially targeted to be completed by March, 2014 but has faced severe delays, with the current target for completion in 2023-24. The Committee

recommends that the Ministry may urgently look into the issues that led to such huge delays in the implementation of these projects and use the insights gained from this analysis into ensuring that the revised target of completion of SARDP-NE Phase-A by 2023-24 is achieved as well as to mitigate delays in the execution of SARDP Phase-B once it is initiated.

RESEARCH, TRAINING, STUDIES AND OTHER ROAD SAFETY SCHEMES

82. The fund under the head „Research, Training, Studies and Other Road Safety Schemes“ is for the Road Safety of Road Transport related activities like Training of drivers, Publicity and awareness, National Highways Accident Relief Service Scheme, Road Safety & Pollution Testing Equipment, etc.

83. The Ministry furnished the following information regarding the Budget head wise allocation under the head „Research, Training, Studies and other Road Safety Schemes“ at BE, proposed revised estimate for the current Financial Year alongwith reasons for drop from BE:

(Amount in Rs. Cr.)

Sr. No.	Name of Scheme	FY 2021-22		Reasons for proposed drop from BE
		BE	RE	
1	Road Safety publicity measures	75.00	75.00	
2	National Highways Accident Relief Service Project	1.00	0.50	
3	GIA-Training and Human Resource Development	10.00	3.00	Scheme is under third party evaluation. New scheme is yet to be formulated.

4	Grant for Creation of Capital Assets (Setting up of IDTR/ RDTC/DTC)	22.00	22.00	
5	OAE(Data Collection R&D, Transportation studies)	5.00	5.00	
6	National Road Safety Board	20.00	4.00	On draft note for Committee on establishment expenditure (CEE), D/o Expenditure advised that the Number and level of the Board Members may be reduced to three from seven projected earlier and the requirement of other manpower being managed from MoRT&H's existing staff and staff of its agencies. Accordingly, the allocation has been reduced to Rs.4.00 crore at RE stage.
7	I & C Centre (Revenue)	29.00	29.00	--
8	E-Transport Mission Mode Project (Vahan Sarathi)	50.00	80.00	--
9	Strengthening of Public Transport System	70.00	..	Scheme is under third party evaluation. New scheme is yet to be formulated.

10	Development of Large Bus Terminals	33.00	5.00	Scheme is under third party evaluation. New scheme is yet to be formulated.
11	Pollution testing equipment	1.00	..	Project is already completed.
A	Sub Total (Revenue 1 to 11)	316.00	223.50	--
B	I&C Centre (Machinery & Equipment) (Capital)	20.00	5.00	As there are no manufacturers of the Test Lane equipment in the country, the Ministry proposed for Global Tender Enquiry (GTE). Proposal for permission for GTE has been send to competent authority for consideration.
	Total Road Transport and Road Safety Budget of the Ministry (A+B)	336.00	228.50	--

84. Sub-head wise details for RE allocation and actual expenditure under this head for the last five years are as under:

(Amount Rs. In crore)			
Head / Year	RE Allocation	Actual Expenditure	Actual Expenditure as percent of RE Allocation
2016-17			
5055 - Capital	8.5	8.09	95.17

3055-Revenue	134.5	119.14	88.57
Total for 2016-17	143	127.23	88.97
2017-18			
5055 - Capital	6	2.28	38
3055-Revenue	165	142.08	86.10
Total for 2017-18	171	144.36	84.42
2018-19			
Capital	8	0.28	3.50
Revenue	250	158.37	63.34
Total for 2018-19	258	158.65	61.49
2019-20			
5055 - Capital	8	2.29	28.62
3055-Revenue	265	140.22	52.91
Total for 2019-20	273	142.51	52.20
2020-21			
5055 - Capital	5.5	5.34	97.09
3055-Revenue	225	159.65	70.95
Total for 2020-21	230.5	164.99	71.58
2021-22*			
5055 - Capital	5	0	0
3055-Revenue	223.5	65.69	29.39
Total for 2021-22	228.5	65.69	28.75%
*Exp upto Jan 2022			

85. The Ministry informed the Committee that the major causes of under-utilization of funds under the head „Research, Training, Studies and Other Road Safety Schemes“ during the current financial year 2021-22 are as under:

Road Safety Schemes:-

- COVID-19 epidemic has adversely impacted the road safety awareness programmes such as workshops, seminars, advocacy through NGOs and training in unorganized sector of officers of the States / STUs.
- Non-observation of the National Road Safety Month (NRSM), 2021 in January, 2022-February, 2022 due to the COVID-19 epidemic like situation.
- The process of creation of National Road Safety Board (NRSB) has not been completed as creation of a new body involves lot of processes such as publication of rules for comments of General Public, legal vetting of the rules, publication of final rules, circulation of draft note for Committee on establishment expenditure (CEE), constitution of Search-Cum-Selection Committee for selection of the Chairman and Members of the Committee etc.
- Requirement of permission of competent authority for Global Tender Enquiry (GTE) for purchasing Test Lane equipment for 10 Centres.
- Formalities like 3rd party evaluation, circulation of SFC note to considered departments for their views/comments, appraisal of the schemes by SFC and approval of the competent authority etc which are required to continue the schemes beyond 31st March, 2021 during the 15th finance commission cycle period took time and could be concluded in 3rd quarter of the current financial year, 2021-22.
- Due to stay on the scheme of setting up of DTC by Hon'ble Madras High court, no proposal could be sanctioned against the target of 200 DTCs during the 14th Finance Commission cycle period. This also adversely impacted the generation of demand for RDTCs and IDTRs due to organizational linkages.
- Delays in execution of the projects of setting up of IDTRs, RDTCs, I&Cs by the States/UTs due to project specific reasons such as delay in handing over of physical possession of land to the executing agency, weather conditions, litigation on the land, delays in obtaining clearance from the local authorities etc.

Road Transport Scheme:-

(i) **Development of large bus terminals in States / Union Territories on BOT basis:**

So far, Ministry has received 14 proposals from the States for the busports. However as the land provided by the States are not very viable from the point of view of the commercial exploitation there was a high requirement of Viability Gap Funding (VGF) which was beyond the limits of the VGF as provisioned in the scheme. Scheme was applicable till March 2021. It is under third party evaluation.

(ii) **Strengthening Public Transport System in the Country- ITS Scheme:**

- **One-time Central Assistance of Rs. 29.71 Crores to Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC)** for implementation of Unified Ticketing Solution in APSRTC subject to the following conditions:

Ø First instalment of **Rs. 14.69 Crores of the approved Central assistance (Rs. 29.71 Crs.)** released during the year 2020-21 towards first installment for implementation of the above project.

Ø **Only one project for AP was approved in last three years. This scheme is also under third party evaluation.**

(iii) **Training programmes for Transport / Traffic Department Officials of States/UT Governments for development of Human Resources:**

MoRT&H has been sponsoring various training programmes for Transport / Traffic Department Officials of States/UT Governments for development of Human Resources in the Transport Sector i.e. for Transport / Traffic Department Officials of States/UT Governments – The training programmes are essential for keeping the officers of States / UTs updated with the rules and regulations of MV Act, 1988 and CMVR 1989. through leading Institutions namely CIRT, Pune, ARAI, Pune, ESCI, Hyderabad, IRTE, Faridabad, IIT, Delhi, PCRA, Delhi and IIP, Dehradun. The present allocation of funds for year 2020-21 is Rs. 10 crores.

CIRT along with other Institutes such as ARAI, IIP, AITD etc. has also been conducting training programmes sponsored by MoRTH with the objective to update the Transport officials of States with new rules and regulations related to the transport sector and improve awareness levels on key issues such as road safety, vehicle pollution and enforcement regulations to improve the safety, efficiency and productivity of the transport sector.

Scheme was valid till March 2021. The scheme is under third party evaluation.

86. The Committee enquired from the Ministry about the reasons behind low sanction of R&D schemes in the road sector. The Ministry, in its written reply, informed that it sanctioned 5 R&D Schemes during last 3 financial years costing Rs. 2.04 crore considering their relevance of practical applications in formulating/revising IRC/MoRTH standards / guidelines etc. for design, construction, operation and maintenance of highways; the Ministry had also established one MoRTH Chair Professor in IIT BHU, Varanasi and continued existing MoRTH Chair Professor at IIT Roorkee. During 2021-22, the Ministry has approved 4 research schemes and established one MoRTH Chair Professor in IIT Madras. 2 other research proposals are also under consideration for approval, apart from establishing one MoRTH Chair Professor at IIT Bombay. It stated that apart from the above, NHAI has taken up 14 nos. of R&D schemes costing about Rs. 9.35 crore. The Ministry takes up more practical applications oriented R&D schemes with focus on new materials and technology as and when necessary and there are experts available for the purpose.

87. The Ministry has stated the reason for reduction of funds for several schemes under this head at RE 2021-22 stage is due to the fact that they are under third party evaluation. The Committee feels that the Ministry should conduct this third party evaluation before the activities under the existing approved scheme have been completed so that schemes working to improve road safety through various means, are not totally stalled because of such evaluations.

88. The Committee is anguished to note the poor expenditure pattern under the crucial head 'Research, Training, Studies and Other Road Safety Schemes' since the past several years. The various activities under this heads viz., Training of drivers, Publicity and

awareness, National Highways Accident Relief Service Scheme, Road Safety & Pollution Testing Equipment, etc. are crucial for improving the scenario of road safety on National Highways across the country and to offset the huge death toll faced by the country each year due to road accidents. The Committee is not satisfied with the reasons furnished by the Ministry for the poor expenditure pattern under this head and feels remedial measures should be taken to make maximum utilization of the limited funds available under this head. This pattern questions the commitment of the Ministry to make earnest efforts to minimize the deaths caused due to road accidents each year. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may cull out all the issues causing under-utilization under this important head at the earliest so that due focus is laid on road safety in the coming years.

89. The Committee is surprised to note that the Ministry has sanctioned just 5 R&D schemes worth merely Rs. 2.04 crores during the last 3 financial years. For comparison, United States' Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) had an annual budget of about US\$47 billion for the FY 2020 (compared to MoRTH's R.E. 2021-22 allocation of Rs. 131,149 crores i.e. roughly US\$ 17.33 billion) and the fund allocated for 'Research, Technology, and Education Program' is \$420 million (i.e., about Rs. 3177 crores). While the Committee appreciates that such comparisons cannot be directly made between such differing economies owing to differences in requirements and present focus, the magnitude of difference in the importance being given to R&D and related activities points to the need for the Ministry to have a major rethink about its missing focus on R&D in the road sector. The Committee strongly recommends that the Ministry may strive to sanction more and more R&D schemes and work with best global institutions in this field in order to carve out niche solutions for the varied problems plaguing the Indian road sector at present. The Committee feels that the same would also help the Ministry to have a better, clearer long-term vision in creating a safe, robust, well-maintained NH network across the diverse geographies of the country.

90. The Ministry, in its written reply, furnished the following State-wise details regarding the number of road accidents that have taken place in the country in the last 5 years is as under.

Sl.	States/UTs	Number of Road Accidents
-----	------------	--------------------------

No.		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
1	Andhra Pradesh	24888	25727	24475	21992	19509
2	Arunachal Pradesh	249	241	277	237	134
3	Assam	7435	7170	8248	8350	6595
4	Bihar	8222	8855	9600	10007	8639
5	Chhattisgarh	13580	13563	13864	13899	11656
6	Goa	4304	3917	3709	3440	2375
7	Gujarat	21859	19081	18769	17046	13398
8	Haryana	11234	11258	11238	10944	9431
9	Himachal Pradesh	3168	3114	3110	2873	2239
10	Jammu & Kashmir	5501	5624	5978	5796	4860
11	Jharkhand	4932	5198	5394	5217	4405
12	Karnataka	44403	42542	41707	40658	34178
13	Kerala	39420	38470	40181	41111	27877
14	Madhya Pradesh	53972	53399	51397	50669	45266
15	Maharashtra	39878	35853	35717	32925	24971
16	Manipur	538	578	601	672	432
17	Meghalaya	620	675	399	482	214
18	Mizoram	83	68	53	62	53
19	Nagaland	75	531	430	358	500
20	Odisha	10532	10855	11262	11064	9817
21	Punjab	6952	6273	6428	6348	5203
22	Rajasthan	23066	22112	21743	23480	19114
23	Sikkim	210	196	180	162	138
24	Tamil Nadu	71431	65562	63920	57228	45484
25	Telangana	22811	22484	22230	21570	19172
26	Tripura	557	503	552	655	466
27	Uttarakhand	1591	1603	1468	1352	1041

28	Uttar Pradesh	35612	38783	42568	42572	34243
29	West Bengal	13580	11631	12705	10158	9180
30	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	238	189	254	230	141
31	Chandigarh	428	342	316	305	159
32	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	70	67	80	68	100
33	Daman & Diu	71	79	76	69	
34	Delhi	7375	6673	6515	5610	4178
35	Lakshadweep	1	1	3	1	1
36	Puducherry	1766	1693	1597	1392	969
Total		480652	464910	467044	449002	366138

91. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may analyze the State-wise/UT-wise trends of road accidents and deaths and work closely with the State Governments where an increasing trend is observed. Effective implementation of road safety initiatives by States where there is noticeable decrease in the number of road accidents/deaths, may be shown as a blueprint to States failing to do well in terms of road safety on NHs as well as other roads.

92. The Committee further recommends that urgent steps may be taken in coordination with concerned local authorities to tackle the problem of stray cattle and other animals trespassing National Highways posing tremendous security risk to the passengers, especially women, seniors and children, besides causing hindrance on the smooth flow of traffic on NHs. Barriers may be erected to prevent stray cattle and other animals from coming onto NHs in stretches where this problem is faced frequently. Other possible solutions may be looked into to minimize such incidents across the entire NH network in the country so as to make NH travel safer and free-flowing for all passengers.

93. The Ministry informed the Committee that several engineering measures have been undertaken to improve road safety in FY21 & FY22. Total 5,803 black spots have been identified. On these, short term measures have been undertaken in almost all black spots and 3,332 have been rectified via long-term measures.

94. The Ministry conducted Road Safety Audits in FY22 as part of Road Safety improvement measures and supported certification course *for Road Safety Auditors via IAHE*. To execute these measures, a budgetary outlay of Rs. 229 cr is provided in FY22 (RE) whereas about Rs. 81 cr is the expenditure done till Jan“2022.

95. The Committee is deeply anguished to note that against RE 2021-22 allocation of Rs. 229 crore for Road Safety measures, the Ministry has managed to spend only Rs. 81 crore i.e., just 35% of the allocated sum, till January, 2022. As noted by the Committee in para 85 above, this pattern of low expenditure makes it evident that a sense of urgency and zeal is thoroughly lacking in the steps taken by the Ministry to minimize the huge toll of deaths happening on National Highways due to road accidents. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may pay more attention to its road safety activities since the Ministry shoulders the responsibility of making the NH network safer across the country. Remedial measures may be taken at the earliest in order to ensure optimal utilization of the allocation made under this during FY 22-23.

96. The Ministry further submitted that it has formulated a multi-pronged strategy to address the issue of road safety based on Education, Engineering (both of roads and vehicles), Enforcement and Emergency Care. Accordingly, various initiatives have been taken by the Ministry as detailed below :-

i. Education:

- The Ministry implements a scheme for undertaking publicity measures and awareness campaigns on road safety to create awareness among road users through the electronic media, print media, NGOs etc.
- Observance of National Road Safety Month every year for spreading awareness and strengthening road safety.
- A Certification Course for Road Safety Auditors has been commenced in Indian Academy of Highway Engineers (IAHE).

ii. Engineering (Both of Road and Vehicles)

- Road engineering

- Road safety has been made an integral part of road design at planning stage.
 - Roads are designed and constructed as per relevant IRC codes/Manuals, which prescribes design & Construction with Zero Accidents.
 - Guidelines for pedestrian facilities on National Highways for persons with disabilities have also been issued to all States / UTs.
 - High priority to identification and rectification of black spots (accident prone spots) on national highways.
 - The threshold for four laning of national highway has been reduced from 15,000 Passenger Car Units (PCUs) to 10,000 PCUs.
 - Ministry has delegated powers to Regional Officers of MORTH for technical approval to the detailed estimates for rectification of identified Road Accident black spots.
 - Vehicle Engineering:
 - Safety standards for automobiles have been improved.
 - Mandatory Airbags for Front Co-passengers
 - Scheme for setting up one model Inspection & Certification Centre in each State/UT with Central assistance for testing the fitness of vehicles through an automated system.
- iii. ENFORCEMENT:
- The recently passed Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019 provides for strict enforcement through use of technology and further provides for strict penalties for ensuring strict compliance and enhancing deterrence for violation of traffic rules.
 - Issue of Guidelines for protection of Good Samaritans and draft rules as per MV(amendment) Act, 2019 has been published. Launching of scheme for award to Good Samaritans.
 - Rules for accreditation of Driving Training Centres in the country has been notified to make the driving training scientific and systematic, vest the accredited Driving Training Center with certain functions like testing of aspirants for issue of driving license and to make accredited driving Training Centre a commercially viable business proposition

iv. EMERGENCY CARE:

- The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019 provides for a scheme for cashless treatment of victims of the accident during the golden hour.
- The NHAI has made provisions for ambulances at all toll plazas on the completed corridor of National Highways. NHAI has deployed 710 ambulances near its toll plazas to cater to any emergency on NHs. Out of this, 331 ambulances have been upgraded to Basic Life Support as per AIS-125.

97. The Ministry, executes several schemes with a vision to enhance road safety and promote electric mobility in the country. In FY22, the following initiatives have been undertaken under Road Transport Sector:

- Introduction of various safety measures on vehicles
- Framing regulations for Alternative Fuels
- Under the Vahan – Sarathi scheme, a data of 29 crore vehicles and 19 crore licenses have been captured. Online services have been enabled.
- Rules for Accredited Driving Training Centres have been notified.
- Rules for Automated Test Station (ATS) for fitness check of vehicles have been notified in Sep., 2021
- NHAI has deployed 710 ambulances near its toll plazas to cater to any emergency on NHs. Out of 710 ambulances, 331 ambulances have been upgraded to Basic Life Support as per AIS-125.
- Online applications from NGOs for eye checkup camps on NHs and road safety advocacy programme were invited till November 2021 through scheme portal which are under process.

98. The Ministry has also started a scheme for awards to the Good Samaritan, who has saved the life of a victim of a fatal accident involving a motor vehicle.

99. The Committee enquired the Ministry about the scheme for cashless treatment of road accident victims. The Ministry informed the Committee that a scheme is under finalisation in consultation with NITI Aayog and National Health Authority.

100. The Committee notes the various measures taken by the Ministry to bolster road safety on NHs across the country. A huge number of road accident deaths and the resultant negative effect of the same on the economic growth potential of the country is immense. Keeping this in mind, a lot more still needs to be done in order to minimize the number of road accidents and deaths happening in the country. The Committee feels that besides high-quality maintenance of National Highways and implementation of safety measures therein, having well-trained and educated drivers on our NHs holds the key to improving the driving habits of the average Indian driver and making them more aware of traffic rules and the need for adhering to them. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry may request the Ministry of Education to seriously consider the inclusion of lessons to spread awareness about good driving habits, traffic laws, good samaritan law etc., at the school level itself. The Committee further recommends that the scheme for cashless treatment of road accident victims may be finalized at the earliest.

101. The Ministry furnished the following information regarding the year-wise annual call volume since inception of the existing NH Helpline Number 1033:-

Year	No. of Calls received
2018	5,27,348
2019	12,48,581
2020	24,65,626
2021	26,08,338

102. The Committee feels that the steadily increasing volume of calls being received on the NH Helpline Number 1033 speaks for the increasing awareness about the same among general public. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may strive to further increase awareness about the helpline numbers through various means, both offline and online.

SCHEME ON WOMEN SAFETY

103. The Ministry informed that a total amount of Rs. 12 Crs. has been released to the States under the Scheme for State-wise Vehicle Tracking Platform under Nirbhaya Fund for the year 2021-22 till November,2021.

100. On submitting the reasons for a drastically reduced R.E. 2021-22 allocation of Rs. 33.00 crores for the Scheme on Women Safety on Public Transport as compared to B.E. 2021-22 allocation of Rs. 100.00 crores, the Ministry informed the Committee that the scheme for State Wise Vehicle Tracking Platform under Nirbhaya Scheme is under execution by the States. Funds have been sanctioned for 29 States, out of which 27 States have already received the same. Funds are yet to be transferred to two States (MP & Rajasthan): this aspect is being pursued with these States. Seven States/UTs (Haryana, NCT of Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Lakshadweep) have not opted for the scheme in spite of several reminders. The execution of projects by states is also affected due to COVID-19 pandemic. No separate proposal for women safety in Public Transport from the states has been received and approved under the Nirbhaya Framework.

104. The Committee enquired about the reason for a huge reduction of 80% in the BE 2022-23 allocation of Rs. 20 crores under the head „Scheme on Women Safety on Public Road Transport“, as against BE 2021-22 allocation of Rs. 100 crores. The Ministry, in its written reply, informed the Committee that no separate proposal has been received from the States for the public transport scheme under the Nirbhaya Framework. The funds are being demanded and spent as per the requirement in the existing schemes.

105. The Ministry further submitted that it shall continue to pursue the early implementation of its scheme "Development, Customization, Deployment and Management of State-wise vehicle tracking platform for Safety & Enforcement as per AIS 140 Specifications in States / UTs under Nirbhaya Framework " with States. States will also be advised to submit innovative projects on women safety in Public Transport under Nirbhaya Framework.

106. The Committee notes that seven States/UTs (Haryana, NCT of Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Lakshadweep) have not opted for the scheme

despite several reminders. It is difficult to understand the lethargic response of so many States towards such a scheme, which, if implemented, will definitely help improve the state of women's safety. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may try to raise this issue with these States'/UTs' Governments/Administration at the highest level and try to understand the reasons behind their disinterest in the implementation of the scheme in their respective State/UT.

107. The Committee further notes that the Ministry has stated that no separate proposal has been received from States for the public transport scheme under the Nirbhaya Framework, as the reason behind the drastic reduction of 80 percent in the BE 2022-23 allocation of Rs. 20 crores under the head 'Scheme on Women Safety on Public Road Transport', against BE 2021-22 allocation of Rs. 100 crores. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may come up with more effective schemes to improve the state of safety of women on National Highways and in public transportation.

108. The Committee adds that basic safety measures such as proper signages, streetlights, highway patrol at frequent distances etc. are often found to be lacking on National Highways. The Committee is of the view that ensuring such measures is not budget-intensive and feels that there is an urgent, pressing need to ensure that these very basic measures are enforced across the entire NH stretch in the country. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommends that the Ministry may conduct road safety audits across the entire stretch of NHs and ensure proper signages, streetlights and highway patrol. This would not only help women travelling on NHs feel safer, especially at night, but also boost the overall safety of the road passengers at large. Signages may prominently display helpline numbers for different emergencies in English, Hindi as well as local language.

109. The Committee also points out the total lack of mobile network connectivity for large stretches of National Highways. The Committee feels that having no mobile network connectivity for extended stretches of NHs is a serious cause of concern since the same would mean issues would be faced in connecting to emergency services as well. Besides the safety aspect, the Committee feels that having basic mobile connectivity while travelling is getting more and more important in the modern times, with navigational services and several other forms of important communications rely on on-the-go mobile connectivity.

While it is understood that the installation of cell towers is carried out by telecommunication companies on the basis of the number of users in the area, the Committee feels that given the high volume of traffic plying on National Highways across the country, many such stretches might be having sufficient demand from users for good internet connectivity. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry may look into this matter and if feasible, suitable measures may be taken to ensure good mobile connectivity for NH users, in coordination with the Department of Telecommunications and other organizations concerned.

SCHEMES OF STATES AND UTs FINANCED FROM CRIF

110. The Ministry furnished the following State / Union Territory (UT) wise details of the list of projects approved under the heads „Schemes of States financed from CRIF“ and „Schemes of UTs financed from CRIF“ during current FY 2021-22 is as under.

S. No.	State/UT	No.	Length (Km)	Cost (Rs. Crore)
1	Goa	6	75.09	80.51
2	Haryana	1	24.1	99.14
3	Himachal Pradesh	13	94.02	237.95
4	Madhya Pradesh	24	599.33	1892.98
5	Maharashtra	272	1597	2041
6	Punjab	5	32.56	272.02
7	Rajasthan	80	1600.06	2031.83
8	Telangana	48	611.51	878.55
9	Uttarakhand	42	318.33	615.48
10	Puducherry	4	41.27	33
	Total	217	3227.16	5823

111. **The Committee is surprised to note that road projects pertaining to only 10 States/UTs have been approved under the heads ‘Schemes of States financed from CRIF’ and ‘Schemes of UTs financed from CRIF’ during the ongoing FY 2021-22. The Committee desires to be apprised of the reasons behind the same. The Committee has submitted a detailed report on CRIF. The recommendation made in that report may be followed scrupulously.**

MISCELLANEOUS

Indian Roads Congress and Central Road Research Institute

112. The Committee sought to know the view of the Ministry in providing budgetary support for IRC to carry out research programmes in collaboration with the leading Universities/Research Institutions. In its written reply, IRC did not carry out any research activity, recently IRC has set up a Committee for identifying important pilot research projects which may be taken up through eminent research organizations and academic institutions of repute. Based on the recommendations of the Committee, further view may be taken regarding undertaking the same.

113. **The Committee observes that the construction of National Highways is carried out as per the standards and specifications laid down in various IRC standards. It is evident that the codes and standards published by IRC are of extreme significance, with the quality of construction of NHs across the country directly dependent on the same. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry may submit information regarding the various issues being faced at present in construction of NHs in the country to the committee set up by IRC to aid in its exercise for identification of important pilot research projects and ensure that sufficient allocation is made available to IRC in order to carry out such projects through eminent research organizations and academic institutions of repute.**

114. The Committee notes that Central Road Research Institute (CRRI) is a premier national laboratory established in 1952 which is a constituent of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and is engaged in carrying out research and development projects on design, construction and maintenance of roads and runways, traffic and transportation planning of mega

and medium cities, management of roads in different terrains, improvement of marginal materials, utilization of industrial waste in road construction, landslide control, ground improvements environmental pollution, road traffic safety and analysis & design, wind, fatigue, corrosion studies, performance monitoring/evaluation, service life assessment and rehabilitation of highway & railway bridges. For capacity building of human resources in the area of highway Engineering to undertake and execute roads and runway projects, CRRI has the competence to organize national and international training programmes to disseminate the R&D finding to the masses.

115. The Committee observes that the activities carried out by CRRI are of great significance for the effective development and maintenance of an intricate road network in India through its activities pertaining to Research and Development in the road sector as well as its national and international training programmes for capacity building of human resources in the area of highway engineering. The Committee expresses its apprehensions that since CRRI is a constituent of CSIR, which is an autonomous body under the administrative supervision of the Ministry of Science and Technology, there might be a lack of cohesive and concerted efforts between CRRI and the R&D and HR training institutes of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways viz., IAHE, IRC and NHAI's SRD&Q Division. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may ensure that sufficient budgetary allocation is made available to fund the activities carried out by CRRI, IRC, SRD&Q Division and IAHE so as to bolster the R&D and HR training aspects of the Indian road sector. Efforts may also be made to ensure that there is strong coordination between all these agencies to complement each other's efforts for the overall improvement of the road sector in the country. The knowledge gained by these research and training agencies may be freely shared with the various road construction agencies in the country, including State PWDs.

116. The Committee recommends that IRC may collaborate with CRRI and conduct research on usage of innovative materials for road construction and strengthening road safety through improved design and construction techniques, particularly looking into road accidents that take place at entry and exit points of highways.

Provisions for service roads

117. The Committee observes that the lack of service roads alongside National Highways causes inconvenience to local residents and is, at times, the cause of road accidents. The land required for development of National Highways is acquired from the local people and they should be given the benefits of service roads along National Highways. The Committee feels that service roads are an integral part of National Highways and therefore, recommends that the Ministry may make it mandatory to have service roads along NHs to the extent possible and provisions for the same may be included in the tender document for NH projects.

Five Year Vision Plan for Infrastructure Sector

118. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may take concerted measures to achieve the ambitious goals laid out in the Five Year Vision Plan (2019-24) for Infrastructure Sector, prepared by the Sectoral Group of Secretaries, which include targeting reduction of accident fatalities by at least 25%, strengthening public transport and shared mobility through regulatory reforms, strengthening connectivity to top 100 tourist destinations, development of helipads near Highways for victim evacuation and commercial purposes, development of contractors database to identify underperformers and habitual litigants, etc. A robust monitoring mechanism may be put in place in order to assess the progress being made in regard of all the goals and targets laid out under the Five Year Vision Plan.

CAG Audit Paras

119. The Ministry furnished the following information regarding pending audit paras:

Civil Paras - One (Detail given below)

Sl. No.	Paras	Ministry's Remarks/ Present Status
---------	-------	---------------------------------------

1.	Para No. 6.1 of Report No. 3 of 2020 – Scheme for setting up of Inspection and Certification Centres.	ATN sent to C&AG.
----	---	-------------------

Commercial paras - Details given below

Pending list of C&AG Audit Paras (Commercials)

Sl. No.	Paras	Ministry's Remarks/ Present Status
1.	Para No. 2.1 of Report No. 15 of 2016 – Undue benefit to the concessionaire (PIU Begusarai)	ATN sent to C&AG.
2.	Para No. 2.3 of Report No. 15 of 2016 – Undue benefit to the concessionaire (PIU Darbhanga).	ATN sent to C&AG.
3.	Para 12.1 of Report no. 9 of 2017 – Undue benefit to the concessionaire resulted in accumulation of dues	Matter is pending with the Ministry.
4.	Para 12.3 of Report no. 9 of 2017 – Incorrect revenue projection in financial analysis	ATN sent to C&AG.
5.	Para 11.1 of Report No. 11 of 2018 – Non recovery of damages and maintenance cost from the concessionaire.	ATN sent to C&AG.
6.	Para 11.4 of Report No. 11 of 2018 – Excess payment of bonus to concessionaire	ATN sent to C&AG.
7.	Para 11.5 of Report No. 11 of 2018 – Loss of interest on toll revenue due to delay in delinking of road stretch	Reply awaited from NHAI.
8.	Para 11.6 of Report No. 11 of 2018 – Non –recovery of claims from concessionaire	ATN sent to C&AG.

9.	Para 11.7 of Report No. 11 of 2018– Undue favour to a concessionaire	ATN sent to C&AG.
10.	Para 11.8 of Report No. 11 of 2018– Loss of revenue due to non-collection of toll	ATN sent to C&AG.
11.	Para 8.1(Report No. 13 of 2019)- Extending of undue benefit to the concessionaire	ATN sent to C&AG.
12.	Para 8.2(Report No. 13 of 2019)- Failure in Project Management	Reply awaited from NHAI.
13.	Para 8.3(Report No. 13 of 2019)- Undue financial benefit to concessionaire	ATN sent to C&AG.
14.	Para 11.1(Report No. 18 of 2020)- Improper contract management by NHAI resulted in loss of revenue of ₹ 20.38 crore	Reply awaited from NHAI.
15.	Para 11.2(Report No. 18 of 2020)- Undue benefit to contractors	Reply awaited from NHAI.
16.	Para 11.4(Report No. 18 of 2020)- Short remittance of additional concession fee	Reply awaited from NHAI.

120. The Committee is distressed to note that the reply is awaited from NHAI and matter is pending with the Ministry relating to CAG Audit Paras dating back to as far back as 2017. The Committee strongly recommends that the Ministry and NHAI may take immediate action based on observations made by CAG in its Reports since time lost in such matters can cause loss of valuable information which could otherwise pinpoint culprits involved in giving undue benefits to concessionaires or causing loss of revenue to NHAI.

Awarding of road projects

121. On the question, whether the Ministry has taken any steps to review the present procedure of selection of lowest bids for awarding of road projects, without having any lower cap for such bidding, often causes the project to be awarded to shoddy contractors which leads to avoidable delays in road projects and/or poor construction quality.

122. The Ministry, in its written reply, informed the Committee that at present, projects are awarded on the following criteria under different modes of construction considering the base guidelines issued by the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC).

- In case of EPC (Engineering, Procurement and Construction) Projects, the Bidder whose bid is adjudged as responsive against the test of Responsiveness mentioned in the RFP (Request for Proposal) documents and whose available bid capacity is more than the Total Bid value and who quotes lowest price is declared as the selected bidder.
- In case of HAM (Hybrid Annuity Mode) Projects, the Bidder whose bid is adjudged as responsive against the test of Responsiveness mentioned in the RFP documents and who fulfills the criteria of Technical Capacity and Financial Capacity and whose assessed bid price is lowest is declared as the selected bidder.

123. Information available regarding black listing / debarment of Contractors / Concessionaires on various grounds including Quality of Works implemented are duly considered while awarding works.

124. Noting that NHAI has recently started to rank National Highways across the country based on several parameters, the Committee enquired from the Ministry whether it has any plans to use the data thus obtained to maintain a historical database of the quality of work carried out by various concessionaires across the country. In its written reply, the Ministry informed the Committee that there are various parameters covered in the Highway Rating and not all are related to the quality of construction; rather these parameters relate more to the road user experience. Therefore, using the highway ranking directly to ascertain the quality of construction is not feasible. However, highway rating can be used as part of a broader evaluation framework for evaluating the overall performance of the contractor/concessionaire.

125. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may start maintaining a score of performance of road concessionaires across the country based on the construction quality, timely completion etc. of the road projects worked upon by them. This database based on

work history of road concessionaires may be used as one of the criterias based on which new road projects are awarded, giving priority to concessionaires with excellent project history as long as their financial capacities allow the same.

126. During the meeting of the Committee held on 16th February, 2022, one of the Members raised the issue of road projects being awarded to lowest bidders, who often bid as much as 30 percent below the Ministry/NHAI estimates. He was of the view that such contractors get „Change of Scope“ done for the road projects after getting them awarded at far below the official estimated prices for the projects, in connivance with the officials. He opined that the „Change of Scope“ is where the road concessionaires get their profits from, and suggested that the provisions for „Change of Scope“ should be banned. He opined that connivance between consultants, independent engineers, Regional Officers (ROs), consultant engineers etc. often leads to poor quality of National Highways across the country.

127. **The Committee takes serious view of the issues pointed out by one of its Members regarding the possible connivance of the officials, concessionaires and consultants etc. which leads to poor quality NHs being constructed across the country. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may set up an enquiry committee to look into the above mentioned issues and to devise a mechanism to plug the loopholes present in the existing system which may be leading to the possibility of such corrupt practices. The Committee further recommends that the Ministry may review the requirements presently in place to effectuate a change of scope in a road project and ensure that change of scope is permitted only in rare cases where alternative solutions are not possible.**

128. **The Committee desires to know the number of road projects awarded in which a ‘Change of Scope’ has happened during the last 5 years and the total number of road projects awarded during this period. Similarly, the Committee may be apprised of the number of road projects which have been awarded for more than 20 percent below the official estimated cost and underwent a ‘Change of Scope’ during the last 5 years; and the**

total number of road projects which have been awarded for more than 20 percent below the official estimated during this period.

129. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may examine the feasibility of prescribing upper/lower limits for submission of bids for road projects. Till the time that is done, or if the same is not found to be a feasible alternative, the Ministry may establish a specialized mechanism for closer scrutiny of the road projects that are awarded at substantially lower bids than the official estimates of the Ministry/NHAI.

Promotion of Electric Vehicles

130. The Ministry informed the Committee that steps taken by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways to develop an ecosystem for the promotion of Electric Vehicles (EV) are as under:-

(a) Conversion to Electric and Hybrid vehicles-

Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has notified GSR 167(E) dated 1st March 2019 to facilitate conversion of power trains through retro-fitment of hybrid electric system or electric kit to motor vehicles. This has to be done in compliance with Automotive Industry Standards (AIS) 123.

(b) Import of 2500 Vehicles-

Ministry has notified GSR 870 (E) dated 13.09.2018 to amend rule 92 and rule 126 of Central Motor Vehicle Rules (CMVR), 1989 to enable the import and registration of vehicles, as completely built units(CBU) or completely knocked down units (CKD), complying with equivalent foreign national standards, namely EEC or ECE or Japanese Standards up to 2500 units of motor vehicles of M1[motor vehicles used for the carriage of passengers, comprising not more than eight seats in addition to driver's seat] or L [two wheeled or three wheeled motor vehicle] category of vehicles, as the case may be, and up to 500 units of other categories of vehicles

annually. This will facilitate the vehicle manufacturers in India to import vehicles like electric vehicles in India.

(c) The Government has taken the following measures to to promote Electric mobility in India through non-fiscal incentivisation and electric vehicles in Public Transport and last mile connectivity with zero Emission Vehicles. Accordingly, following steps have been taken-

(d) Green Number Plate for Battery Operated Vehicles –

Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has notified the registration mark for Battery Operated Vehicles to be in Yellow colour on Green background for the transport vehicles and for all other cases, in White colour on Green background. This has been notified by the Ministry through G.S.R 749(E) dated 7th August, 2018. This will enable clear identification of the vehicles.

(i) Exemption of permits for electric vehicles:-

The Ministry, vide S.O. 5333(E) dated 18/10/2018, has granted exemption from requirements of permits, to the Battery Operated Transport Vehicles and Transport Vehicles running on Ethanol and Methanol fuels

(ii) Exemption from registration fees:-

To encourage E- mobility, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways vide GSR 525(E) dated 2nd August, 2021 has exempted Battery Operated Vehicles from the payment of fees for the purpose of issue or renewal of registration certificate and assignment of new registration mark.

(e) Advisories:-

(i) Ministry has issued an advisory dated 17th July, 2019 to all States and Union Territories regarding incentivisation of electric vehicles and induction of electric vehicles in shared mobility and public transport operations.

(ii) The Government has issued an advisory dated 16th June, 2021 to all States and UTs regarding promotion of battery operated vehicles.

(iii) The Government has issued an advisory dated 12th August, 2020 to all States and UTs regarding sale and registration of Electric Vehicles without

batteries. This will reduce the upfront price of EVs by 30-40% and facilitate swapping of batteries.

(f) E-rickshaw-

Ministry has amended the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 (MV Act) through Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2015 dated 19.03.2015 and has notified GSR 709(E) dated 08.10.2014, S.O. 2590(E) dated 08.10.2014 and GSR 27(E) dated 13.01.2015 for amending the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989 (CMVRs) to include specifications regarding manufacture, operation, registration and issue of driving license to e-rickshaw drivers under the ambit of CMVRs.

Further, this Ministry vide S.O. notification 2812(E) dated 30.08.2016 has exempted transport vehicles of the categories, e-cart and e-rickshaw, from the requirements of permit.

131. The Committee notes the steps taken by the Ministry for promotion of electric vehicles in the country and feels that a lot still needs to be done in order to speed up the shift of vehicle-owners towards electric vehicles since EVs come with a huge set of benefits, especially in light of the dire air pollution issues faced in a large number of Indian cities. The shift to electric vehicles will also reduce the dependency of our country on petroleum product imports. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry may take more steps to promote the usage of electric vehicles in the country and work on creation of charging infrastructure for the same alongside National Highways, in coordination with concerned Ministries/organizations. The Ministry may also consider exempting electric vehicles from road tax, offering some discount at toll plazas. The Ministry should work towards undertaking initiatives to boost and promote the production of electric vehicles in the country should also be taken, in close cooperation with concerned Ministries/Departments as well as vehicle manufacturers.

Driving Training Centres

132 The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways launched a scheme of setting up of Driving Training Centres (DTCs) at district level in the country during FY 2017-18. The main aim is to set up a well-equipped model Driving Training Centre at district level to provide quality training to commercial vehicle drivers to improve road and environment safety and strengthen overall mobility on roads. However, no proposal was sanctioned under the scheme during the 14th Finance Commission Cycle period due to stay on the scheme by Hon^{ble} Madras High Court. The stay has been vacated in March, 2021.

133 The Government decided for continuation of the scheme during the 15th Finance Commission Cycle period and accordingly issued guidelines vide letter No. RT-25035/10/2021-RS dated 22.12.2021. The scheme provides for setting up of model DTCs in the aspirational districts and other rural areas of the country. Priority shall be accorded in the first instance for sanctioning one project per district. However, more than one project can be considered for approval for a district with population exceeding 20 lakh if proposals from other districts are not forthcoming. The scheme provides for one-time assistance to the extent of 50% of the project cost, subject to a maximum of Rs 1.00 Crore (all inclusive) for setting up of one Driving Training Centre. The operational expenses (OPEX) of the Centre shall be met by the PPP Partner through its internal accruals or funding from non-governmental sources. The proposals received under the scheme for setting up of Driving Training Centres are under consideration in the Ministry.

134 The Committee desires to be apprised of the number of districts in the country where Driving Training Centres are functional and the number of applications received and approved by the Ministry so far for the one-time assistance scheme for setting up of model DTCs in the country.

Laying of integrated utility corridors along greenfield National Highways

135 The Ministry apprised the Committee that along the Greenfield Highways/Expressways, as a policy, space of 2-3 m has been kept on both side of ROW (Right of Way) for laying of various utility. The combined utility duct all along the greenfield highways/Expressways is neither required as most of the stretch passes through rural setting nor viable. However, as per

the study carried out by Andhra Pradesh Urban Infrastructure Asset Management Limited (APUIAML), there is requirement of laying OFC (Optical Fiber Cable) network along the greenfield highways/expressways and the proposition is viable too.

136. Subsequently, APUIAML was mandated to conduct feasibility of laying OFC lines in utility Corridor with respect to pilot projects of Delhi Mumbai Expressway and Hyderabad Bangalore Industrial Corridor. Upon completion of feasibility study of Delhi Mumbai Expressway, the bids for laying OFC ducts and cable have been invited on EPC (Engineering, Procurement and Construction) mode for a total length of about 1350 km and RFP has been issued on 04.02.2022.

137. The Committee is glad to note that bids have been invited for laying OFC ducts for a total length of about 1350 km. The Committee hopes that the Ministry will utilize the experience gained from this exercise to make provisions for utility ducts alongside more upcoming Greenfield Highways/ Expressways.

Weigh-in-Motion Systems at Toll Plazas

138. The Committee was informed that 467 fee plazas out of 692 fee plazas on National Highways are equipped with MSWIM (Medium Speed Weigh-in-Motion) / SWB (Static Weigh Bridge). For new projects / toll plaza, MSWIM infrastructure are implemented in execution stage only.

139. The Committee recommends that a timeline may be devised to equip the remaining toll plazas on NHs with Weigh-in-Motion systems as well and the details of the timeline may be shared with the Committee, since the system can help curb the practice of overloaded vehicles which not only cause damage to NHs, but also pose great safety risks to other vehicles.

Elyovers over Highways

140. During the meeting of the Committee held on 16th February, 2022, one of the Members noted that multi-lane National Highways are being uplifted to cross Major District Highways (MDR) Other District Roads (ODR) Village Roads (VR), instead of lifting the MDR/ODR/VR over the multi-lane Highway which would probably cost much lower.

141. The Committee would like to know from the Ministry the reasons for lifting the existing MDR/ODR/VR over National Highways instead of lifting the multi-lane NHs over the MDR/ODR/VR.

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS – AT A GLANCE

ANNUAL PLAN 2021-22

The Committee observes that by January, 2022, the Ministry has managed to spend about 77.8 percent of the funds allocated to it at the Revised Estimates (2021-22) stage, which was about 11 percent more than the amount allocated to the Ministry at the Budget Estimates (2021-22) stage. While the Committee is pleased to note the overall pace of utilization of funds by the Ministry, a closer inspection shows that the utilization figures for several important heads viz., ‘Externally Aided Projects’, ‘Development of IT’, ‘R&D Planning Studies’, ‘Bharatmala Pariyojana - work under State PWDs/NHIDCL/BRO etc.’, ‘Maintenance of NHs including Swachhta Action Plan and PIARC’, ‘Tribal Sub-Plan - NH works in NE States, Rajasthan, MP, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, etc.’, and ‘Road Transport’ has been very low. All these heads are already receiving comparatively lower amount of funds, especially keeping in mind the vastness of the National Highways network in the country coupled with the discernible pattern of underutilization of funds under these heads, the Committee feels that the Ministry’s focus has been only on increasing the pace of construction of Highways and not so much on the other areas, which are equally important, if not more. Given the crucial role played by the activities carried out under these heads, for having a safe and pliable National Highways network across the country, the Committee is of the strong view that the Ministry should look into the reasons behind the underutilization of funds under these various key heads and resolve the bottlenecks, if any, in order to ensure optimal utilization of the limited budgetary resources available.

(Para 6)

The Committee is especially concerned to note the extremely low expenditure made under the head Road Transport which has important sub-heads like ‘Research, Training, Studies and Other Road Safety Schemes’ and ‘Scheme on Women Safety on Public Road Transport’. As against BE allocation of Rs. 336 crores, the RE allocation got reduced drastically to Rs. 228.50 crores, a reduction of about 32 percent. The Committee believes that this huge reduction at RE 2021-22 stage points to poor expenditure incurred under this head during the initial quarters by the Ministry. The fact that the Ministry has been

able to spend a mere 28.7 percent of the funds allocated under this scheme till January, 2022 means that it did not take any remedial measures to rectify the issue of sub-optimal expenditure under this head. The Committee is of the firm view that the Ministry should introspectively look into the reasons behind this and take all necessary measures to ensure that the same does not repeat in the FY 2022-23.

(Para 7)

The Committee is happy to note that the Ministry has made significant strides in terms of road length awarded and constructed each year, between the Financial Year 2014-15 and Financial Year 2020-21. The Committee hopes that the Ministry will strive to ensure that the pace of award and construction further increases in the coming years. However, in the ongoing Financial Year 2021-22, despite having spent about 77.8 percent of the allocation made to it at the RE Stage (till January, 2022), the Ministry has managed to achieve only about 56 percent of its targeted award and construction length. The Committee feels that the Ministry's targets regarding the award of projects and completion of construction length for the current Financial Year appear to be ambitious. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may look into the reasons behind falling short of achieving the targeted physical output for the ongoing Financial Year and resolve the issues thus identified so as to ensure that the targeted outputs are achieved in the FY 2022-23.

(Para 13)

The Committee further feels that the Ministry needs to lay commensurate emphasis on road safety on NHs, proactive maintenance and repair of NHs and carrying out researches and studies since doing so would make the rapidly expanding NH network across the country to be more cost-effective and safe and will also provide for speedy movement of the passengers as well as goods.

(Para 14)

ANNUAL PLAN 2022-23

The Committee is happy to note that against the projected demand of Rs. 1,57,384.55 crore made by the Ministry and Rs. 60,000 crore as IEBR, the Ministry has been allocated Rs.

1,99,107.71 crore, thus nullifying the need for raising funds through IEBR. Excluding allocation made under NHAI (Investment), however, the projected demand of the Ministry for the FY 22-23 was Rs. 74,504.55 crores, against which an allocation of Rs. 65292.71 has been made at B.E. 2022-23 stage, owing to substantial shortfall between the projected demand and allocation received for heads such as ‘Externally Aided Projects’, ‘NH(O)’, ‘Bharatmala Pariyojana – work under State PWDs and NHIDCL’, ‘Capital Outlay for N-E States’, ‘Capital Outlay for development of road connectivity in LWE affected areas and other tribal areas’, and ‘Maintenance of NHs including Swachhta Action Plan, PIARC’.

(Para 17)

The Committee is surprised to note that although the overall demand of the Ministry was Rs. 2,17,384.55 crores (including IEBR) and the actual allocation made is Rs. 1,99,107.72 crores (including the nominal proposed IEBR amount of Rs. 0.01 crores), the Ministry has stated that there is no shortfall of fund and accordingly, no adverse effects thereof on any programme/scheme are expected. The Committee desires to know how the Ministry plans to tackle the shortfall between projected demand and allocation received under various heads. The Committee strongly recommends that the Ministry may request the Ministry of Finance to allocate more funds under the heads such as Externally Aided Projects, wherein there is a significant gap between the projected demand of the Ministry and the allocation received at B.E. 2022-23 stage.

(Para 18)

The Committee may be apprised about the reasons for an allocation of only ₹ 200 crores under ‘Bharatmala Pariyojana – work under State PWDs and NHIDCL’ in B.E. 2022-23, as against the projected requirement of ₹ 500 crores.

(Para 19)

Though the Committee welcomes the allocation of ₹ 60 crores in B.E. 2022-23 against the projected requirement of ₹ 30 crores under the head ‘Training, Quality Assurance’, the Committee desires to know how the Ministry plans to utilize the excess allocation.

(Para 20)

The Committee strongly recommends that the Ministry may seriously consider upgrading and reviewing its road maintenance and road safety measures and schemes. Going by the paltry allocations made under the heads for road maintenance and road safety, the present focus of the Ministry seems to be only on the construction of new National Highways while the maintenance and safety aspects of the existing NH network in the country seems to get sidelined, as evident by the allocation of a mere 1.24 percent and 0.18 percent of the overall allocation respectively, for maintenance of NHs and road safety respectively. The Committee is of the considered view that the Ministry should come up with a robust long-term vision for improving the state of the existing NH network in the country by bolstering the allocation under these heads significantly in the coming years, as the present state of NHs across the country leave much to be desired.

(Para 21)

The Committee is pleased to note the trend of increasing allocation to the Ministry, which underscores the importance being given to expanding and improving the National Highways network across the country. The Committee, however, notes that the Ministry has not been able to attract private investment at a similar pace. This is partly the reason for the high IEBR component in the last few years which is mainly why the huge debt burden is currently being faced by NHAI. The Committee appreciates that the IEBR component has been kept to a nominal Rs. 0.01 crore for FY 2022-23, with the Budgetary support made to the Ministry covering for the shortfall in the IEBR component. The Committee, however, feels that neither high budgetary support alone, nor high IEBR component will be able to suffice the investment requirements for the rapid pace of NH development across the country in the long run. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommends that the Ministry may work upon resolving the apprehensions of the private sector which are limiting their participation in the road infrastructure sector in the last few years, by working in close coordination with the concessionaires and financial institutions.

(Para 24)

NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

The Committee notes that the amount of funds released to NHAI has almost tripled since FY 2016-17, while the length constructed by NHAI has increased by only about 63 percent during the same time period. This points to the rising cost of NH construction in the country, a major contribution is that of the steep rise in land acquisition costs. In this regard, the Committee desires to know the impact of the Value Capture Finance policy issued by NHAI, in partly financing the cost of highway construction and the response of the State Governments to the same. The Committee also recommends that the Ministry/NHAI may, as far as possible, try to factor in the rising costs of land acquisition in calculating the cost estimates for its future projects so as to enable accurate budgetary planning for the same. Further, the Ministry/NHAI may come up with ways to monetize the land assets which have been acquired but not been put to use for any possible reason.

(Para 27)

NHAI Debt Servicing

The Committee notes that the debt servicing cost of NHAI has been consistently increasing since FY 2021-22 and is expected to fall from the FY 2022-23 onwards, presumably because NHAI is proposed to raise just Rs. 1 lakh as IEBR component in the FY 2022-23. The Committee may be apprised of the reason for increase in the amount that is estimated by the Ministry to be spent on servicing NHAI debts during FY 25-26.

(Para 29)

The Committee recommends that the Ministry/NHAI may take financial decisions with due long-term planning and ensure that NHAI debt levels stay within sustainable levels, aided in part by innovative financing and monetization of NH assets.

(Para 30)

Vacancies in NHAI

The Committee is highly distressed to note that despite the recommendations to the Ministry year after year, NHAI, with a budgetary allocation of Rs. 134,015 crores, is still operating with only 61.2 percent of its sanctioned strength. The Committee fails to understand how NHAI will be able to do justice to its mandate with more than a third of its

sanctioned strength being vacant. The Committee strongly recommends that the Ministry should take immediate measures to fill the vacancies in NHAI at shortest possible time.

(Para 35)

It has come to the notice of the Committee that the first Recruitment Rules (RR) of NHAI had provisions for direct recruitment of officials up to General Manager (GM) level, both in Technical and Finance division. However, over time, these seats were commuted into promotion and deputation seats by removing the provision of direct recruitment from GM to Manager levels, which might be because of increased influence of officials on deputation in NHAI.

(Para 36)

The Committee is of the view that commuting the Direct Recruitment posts to only promotion and deputation posts has caused a lot of difficulty in the efficient functioning of NHAI, especially in finance wing, as there is a dearth of candidates eligible for deputation because of various reasons, such as:

- a. NHAI follows Double Entry Accounting pattern whereas Government agencies follow Single Entry Accounting
- b. Disparity in pay scale as NHAI and PSUs follow different pay pattern
- c. Non-willingness of Central/State PSUs to spare their officials as they themselves face shortage of officials
- d. Ineligibility of internal candidates for promotion

(Para 37)

The Committee observes that because of these issues, an Expert Committee was formed to redress the issue and Draft Recruitment Rules, 2017 were formulated re-introducing the provision for Direct Recruitment upto DGM level in Finance cadre, by reducing quota for deputation and promotion for three years until equilibrium was reached in the hierarchy. It has come to the notice of the Committee that lobbies of deputation officials working in NHAI got the provisions changed before the draft RR could be placed for board approval and in the end, only changes made in the new RR were linguistic and a reduction of

promotion time period from 5 years to 4 years. In this regard, the Committee recommends that the Ministry may furnish details regarding the exact changes made in the existing RR by the Expert Committee in 2017.

(Para 38)

The Committee took up this issue in its 296th Report on ‘Role of Highways in Nation Building’. In the Action Taken Replies furnished by the Ministry on the 296th Report of the Committee, it has been observed that a large number of vacancies exist in NHAI from Deputy Manager level to GM level in Finance cadre, which implies that NHAI is mostly functioning with Junior Accountants and Young Professionals (YP) who neither have appropriate educational qualifications nor experience, but are handling thousands of crores of public money possibly serving the vested interests of the contractors. The Committee further notes that despite several advertisement for deputation in Finance wing, no applications were received for eligible candidates and NHAI kept rolling on the advertisement.

(Para 39)

The Committee is surprised to note that in para 5.1 of Chapter III of the 307th Report of the Committee, NHAI has clearly indicated various problems in recruiting officials under deputation quota, but still NHAI frames policy for recruitment under deputation only. It may also be noted that under para 5.2 of Chapter III of that Report, NHAI has replied that review of Finance cadre RR was recently done and accordingly, new advertisement has been made. The Committee may be apprised of the various changes made in the RR after this review.

(Para 40)

In para 6.1 of Chapter III of the 307th Report of the Committee, NHAI has mentioned that while vacancies from CGM to Deputy Manager in Finance cadre range from 50 percent to 90 percent, the employee strength is maximum at Junior Accountant level. The Committee fails to understand how an organization managing public money to the tune of lakhs of

crores rupees can be run through Junior Accountants, with huge vacancies existing at higher levels. In para 9.1 and para 9.2 of the abovementioned Report, it has been stated that direct recruitment above Deputy Manager level will lead to loss of promotion avenues to the Junior Accountants. In this regard, the Committee feels that since at present, promotion seats are 50 percent whereas deputation seats are 50 percent as well, for which NHAI is not able to receive any eligible applications, NHAI may fill the deputation seats through direct recruitment, for which eligible and efficient officials at lower level can apply as well, further improving their promotion prospects.

(Para 41)

In this regard, it is further observed that Railways has its own cadre because huge funds are involved, so a responsible cadre is required and outsiders at such lower level who will come for few years and go, cannot be relied upon with huge financial stake, in view of accountability issues. It may also be noted that all Central PSUs, whether ONGC, PFC, GAIL, SAIL etc., recruit around 35 percent of their officials on direct basis at all levels, to have experienced candidates from the market and bring equilibrium in the system, also helping eligible internal candidates to rise to higher ranks.

(Para 42)

In view of the above, the Committee recommends that the following suggestion may be considered with the permissible framework of NHAI:

- a. NHAI needs to amend and improve the way it is being run at present. It should take appropriate steps to ensure that it is not managing its huge budgetary allocation through Junior Accountants alone, with a drastic number of vacancies existing at higher levels.
- b. RRs for Technical and Financial cadres were amended together in the past but now NHAI is revisiting amendment in technical cadre alone but not in Finance cadre, giving the reason that the amendment in Finance cadre RRs

was recently done, which is contradictory. NHAI should bring transparency in its policy formulation.

- c. A committee may be set up comprising senior officials of relevant discipline, to formulate new RRs for filling up all posts presently under deputation mode, via Direct Recruitment, taking provision of three years which will generate equilibrium in the hierarchy of the cadre by filling all such posts.
- d. NHAI should correct the blunder it has made by correlating B.Com. with higher qualifications like CA/ICWA/MBA(F) in its eligibility for Deputation Mode, since it was unable to get enough applications for highly qualified candidates under the Deputation Mode earlier. Having a workforce with higher qualifications and experience will help NHAI utilize its budgetary allocation in a more efficient manner.
- e. With Direct Recruitment, the stay of Orissa High Court for not recruiting on Deputation mode can be got vacated and eligible internal candidates can also apply for these DR posts.
- f. Since the education qualification of already recruited candidates in Finance is only B.Com. with no requisite qualification and experience, their higher promotions should not be done blindly, rather it should be as per their efficiency and acquiring higher qualifications.
- g. Till new Recruitment Rules are framed to resolve these issues, all present advertisements may be put into abeyance.

(Para 43)

The Committee feels that NHAI can resolve a lot of issues with these amendments and bring transparency and efficiency in its system.

(Para 44)

Standards, Research and Development & Quality (SRD&Q) Division, NHAI

The Committee feels that the SRD&Q Division should be more active in the field of research in the road sector and utilize the vast troves of data available with NHAI to come up with solutions presently stifling the usability and effectiveness of the NH network in the country. Research activities to be undertaken should be planned in advance with inputs from both within and outside NHAI regarding the bottlenecks/difficulties that need to be addressed in the road sector in India, taking cues from international best standards. Special budgetary provisions should be made to fund such researches/studies which will try to address the aforesaid pain-points. The Committee recommends that the Ministry/NHAI may recruit an eminent researcher in the field as the head of the SRD&Q Division so that overall R&D activities carried out can be monitored well in the road infrastructure sector by the Ministry.

(Para 46)

Sukhad Yatra Smartphone Application

The Committee is concerned to note that the number of complaints received via the Sukhad Yatra application has not shown any uptick since 2018. The Committee is of the considered view that wide adoption of the application can help NHAI gain free actionable information regarding the issues being faced by NH users across the country, which can be quickly acted upon, thus ensuring a well-maintained and safe driving experience on the NHs. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry may work upon improving the usability of the Sukhad Yatra smartphone application at the earliest and come up with innovative means to promote the application to NH users across the country. An option to seek feedback from the person posting a complaint using the app, may also be added so as to gain insight into whether the problem pointed out by the complainant has actually been resolved or not.

(Para 51)

DELAYED ROAD PROJECTS

The Committee is concerned to note that a lot of road projects across the country are delayed at present. The Committee notes the various reasons enumerated by the Ministry behind the delays in the projects, and the steps being taken by the Ministry for completing the delayed projects. Road infrastructure project delays are always accompanied by cost

overruns, besides causing a lot of trouble and loss of time to NH commuters. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommends that the Ministry/NHAI may review the road project monitoring mechanism and strengthen the same in order to keep a track on the progress of road projects at every stage and remedial measures may be taken wherever delays are apparently noticed at the earliest.

(Para 56)

The Committee notes that a Corridor Rating Methodology⁴ for project management and accountability has been devised by NHAI. The Committee reiterates the recommendation it has previously made in para 22 of its 296th Report on 'Role of Highways in Nation Building' regarding creation of a central database of National Highways rating scores, including the ones executed by State PWDs, and further recommends that those parameters in the Corridor Rating Methodology which pertain to the performance of road contractors, may be utilized to adjudge their overall performance based on all the road projects they have worked on across the country. The Committee feels that a lot of projects get delayed because of poor performance of contractors and recommends that some weightage may be given to the past performance of road contractors, in terms of timely completion and quality construction, during the process of awarding of road projects.

(Para 57)

The Committee recommends that the Ministry may conduct regular meetings with concerned State Government officials in order to ensure that the land acquisition process for all road projects stays on track. The Committee desires to be apprised of the steps taken by the Ministry to minimize the delays sometimes caused in road projects on account of State Governments' lethargic approach to land acquisition for the project.

(Para 58)

PENDING ARBITRATION CASES

The Committee takes note of the present mechanism available to settle arbitration cases in NHAI and feels that the same needs to be further strengthened since the amount of claims pending under arbitration has risen to Rs. 88,100 crores, which is a worrisome figure. The

⁴ Source: https://nhai.gov.in/nhai/sites/default/files/policy_circular/Highway_Rating_Report_NHAI.pdf

Committee feels that the process of arbitration should be sufficiently quick so as to ensure that road projects do not get stuck. NHAI may consider constituting a higher number of CCIEs if it is felt that doing so would allow faster, parallel processing of the pending arbitration cases.

(Para 61)

BHARATMALA PARIYOJANA PHASE-I

The Committee is deeply concerned to note that though the original timeline for Bharatmala Phase-I targeted its completion by 2021-22, only 20,632 km (59.28% of total) has been awarded while only 7,375 km (21.19% of total) has been constructed by December, 2022 out of the overall target of 34,800 km. This has led to the targeted timeline for completion now being estimated at FY27 while the estimated cost of BMP Phase-I has almost doubled from Rs. 5.35 lakh crores to Rs. 10.63 lakh crores. Considering that the Ministry has managed to construct only about 21.19% of the Phase-I length during more than four years since the inception of the scheme, the Committee is of the view that the targeted completion estimate of FY27 will prove to be a great challenge to the Ministry. Given the direct correlation between delays on project cost and the positive ripple effects that the timely completion of BMP Phase-I will have on several inter-linked economic sectors, it is necessary that the Ministry undertakes all-out measures to ensure that the revised target for completion of BMP Phase-I is met and the bottlenecks being faced by the Ministry in the execution of Phase-I so far may be proactively ironed out.

(Para 65)

The Committee is not satisfied with the response of the Ministry with regard to delays in Port Connectivity Projects under BMP Phase-I wherein it has stated that there has been no delay on its part for implementation of the same. The Committee understands that these projects require coordination with State Governments, Port Authorities etc. but it is still disappointing to note that the length of port connectivity projects awarded and approved so far is just 174 kms out of the 643 kms (*i.e.*, 27.06%) planned under BMP Phase-I. It is pertinent to note that this is considerably behind the overall progress of 59.28% of BMP Phase-I, which in itself is running way behind schedule. The Committee strongly recommends that the Ministry may undertake a review of the coordination mechanism

presently in place for execution of the port connectivity projects, identify the bottlenecks and take immediate measures to resolve the issues thus identified, since poor connectivity to ports is a significant bottleneck in itself, to the growth of the Indian Shipping sector.

(Para 68)

MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF NATIONAL HIGHWAYS

The Committee notes from the reply of the Ministry that about 9,300 km length of NHs is yet to be entrusted to agencies for undertaking development and maintenance works, whereas the tentative length of NHs under maintenance and repair are about 27,000 km and these are not under the liability of other Contractors. The Committee understands that for the time being, about 36,300 km of NHs is being maintained and repaired using the funds available under the head 'Maintenance and Repair (M&R) of NHs', which is about 25.71 percent of the overall 1,41,190 km NH network of the country. The Committee further notes that the budget allocated under this head is a paltry Rs. 2,480 crore for the FY 22-23, which is only about 1.24 percent of the overall BE 2022-23 allocation of Rs. 199,107.71 crores.

(Para 73)

In this regard, the Committee observes that in 'Strategy for New India @ 75'⁵, NITI Aayog has enlisted the following point as one of the ways forward for improvement of road maintenance and safety:

Maintain NH assets by adopting a maintenance management system (MMS). Earmark funds from the Central Road Fund (CRF) for maintenance activities. India should begin with earmarking 10 percent of its annual budget for road and highways for maintenance to move towards the developed country norm of earmarking 40 per cent to 50 per cent of the budget for roads and highways for maintenance.

(Para 74)

⁵ https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2019-01/Strategy_for_New_India_2.pdf

Further, the Committee notes that allocation made for maintenance of Highways pales in comparison with that in developed countries like United States, where the allocation made for maintenance of Federal Highways is more than 50 percent of the overall budget of the Federal Highway Administration⁶. While the Committee appreciates the fact that budgetary allocation for the highway network of a developed economy like United States cannot directly be compared with that of India, which needs to expand its National Highway network at a rapid pace, the concentration on expansion of the NH network alone cannot be permitted to sideline the need for high-quality maintenance of the existing NH network in the country. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry should carry out an overhaul of the existing mechanism for inspection and monitoring of maintenance & repair requirements on National Highways across the country. Given the poor state of National Highways often observed around the country and the direct adversary effect of the same on road safety as well as average speed of the traffic, it is imperative that the Ministry/NHAI may put in efforts to ensure that routine M&R activities are carried out on National Highways in a proactive manner, without waiting for the NHs to reach conditions that would require immediate intervention. The Committee, with a view to effectuate the same, recommends that a mechanism may be developed to quantify the condition of all NH stretches in an objective manner, using international standards as a benchmark for such quantification.

(Para 75)

The Committee is of the considered view that in order to lay such concentrated focus on the conditions of NHs across the country, the Ministry needs to earmark a much higher amount of allocation of funds for the Maintenance and Repair of National Highways. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommends that the Ministry may re-evaluate its budgetary requirements under this head in order to materialize the enhanced focus on maintaining the existing NH network in the country in excellent condition, as suggested by the Committee in its recommendation at para 73 above.

(Para 76)

⁶ https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/cfo/fhwa-fy-2021_budget_508.pdf

The Committee recommends that the Ministry may look into the issue of waterlogging on National Highways in areas with heavy rainfall or flood-prone areas, since the same not only slows the movement of passengers and goods but also poses significant road safety risks. Necessary corrective measures may immediately be taken on the NHs facing waterlogging issues and research may be conducted to look into tackling the issue from the initial design and construction stage of new NH projects.

(Para 77)

SPECIAL ACCELERATED ROAD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (SARDP) FOR NORTH EASTERN AREAS

The Committee is anguished to note that the SARDP-NE Phase-A and Arunachal Pradesh Package was initially targeted to be completed by March, 2014 but has faced severe delays, with the current target for completion in 2023-24. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may urgently look into the issues that led to such huge delays in the implementation of these projects and use the insights gained from this analysis into ensuring that the revised target of completion of SARDP-NE Phase-A by 2023-24 is achieved as well as to mitigate delays in the execution of SARDP Phase-B once it is initiated.

(Para 81)

RESEARCH, TRAINING, STUDIES AND OTHER ROAD SAFETY SCHEMES

The Ministry has stated the reason for reduction of funds for several schemes under this head at RE 2021-22 stage is due to the fact that they are under third party evaluation. The Committee feels that the Ministry should conduct this third party evaluation before the activities under the existing approved scheme have been completed so that schemes working to improve road safety through various means, are not totally stalled because of such evaluations.

(Para 87)

The Committee is anguished to note the poor expenditure pattern under the crucial head ‘Research, Training, Studies and Other Road Safety Schemes’ since the past several years. The various activities under this heads *viz.*, Training of drivers, Publicity and awareness, National Highways Accident Relief Service Scheme, Road Safety & Pollution Testing Equipment, etc. are crucial for improving the scenario of road safety on National Highways across the country and to offset the huge death toll faced by the country each year due to road accidents. The Committee is not satisfied with the reasons furnished by the Ministry for the poor expenditure pattern under this head and feels remedial measures should be taken to make maximum utilization of the limited funds available under this head. This pattern questions the commitment of the Ministry to make earnest efforts to minimize the deaths caused due to road accidents each year. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may cull out all the issues causing under-utilization under this important head at the earliest so that due focus is laid on road safety in the coming years.

(Para 88)

The Committee is surprised to note that the Ministry has sanctioned just 5 R&D schemes worth merely Rs. 2.04 crores during the last 3 financial years. For comparison, United States’ Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) had an annual budget of about US\$47 billion for the FY 2020 (compared to MoRTH’s R.E. 2021-22 allocation of Rs. 131,149 crores i.e. roughly US\$ 17.33 billion) and the fund allocated for ‘Research, Technology, and Education Program’ is \$420 million (i.e., about Rs. 3177 crores). While the Committee appreciates that such comparisons cannot be directly made between such differing economies owing to differences in requirements and present focus, the magnitude of difference in the importance being given to R&D and related activities points to the need for the Ministry to have a major rethink about its missing focus on R&D in the road sector. The Committee strongly recommends that the Ministry may strive to sanction more and more R&D schemes and work with best global institutions in this field in order to carve out niche solutions for the varied problems plaguing the Indian road sector at present. The Committee feels that the same would also help the Ministry to have a better, clearer long-term vision in creating a safe, robust, well-maintained NH network across the diverse geographies of the country.

(Para 89)

The Committee recommends that the Ministry may analyze the State-wise/UT-wise trends of road accidents and deaths and work closely with the State Governments where an increasing trend is observed. Effective implementation of road safety initiatives by States where there is noticeable decrease in the number of road accidents/deaths, may be shown as a blueprint to States failing to do well in terms of road safety on NHs as well as other roads.

(Para 91)

The Committee further recommends that urgent steps may be taken in coordination with concerned local authorities to tackle the problem of stray cattle and other animals trespassing National Highways posing tremendous security risk to the passengers, especially women, seniors and children, besides causing hindrance on the smooth flow of traffic on NHs. Barriers may be erected to prevent stray cattle and other animals from coming onto NHs in stretches where this problem is faced frequently. Other possible solutions may be looked into to minimize such incidents across the entire NH network in the country so as to make NH travel safer and free-flowing for all passengers.

(Para 92)

The Committee is deeply anguished to note that against RE 2021-22 allocation of Rs. 229 crore for Road Safety measures, the Ministry has managed to spend only Rs. 81 crore *i.e.*, just 35% of the allocated sum, till January, 2022. As noted by the Committee in para 85 above, this pattern of low expenditure makes it evident that a sense of urgency and zeal is thoroughly lacking in the steps taken by the Ministry to minimize the huge toll of deaths happening on National Highways due to road accidents. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may pay more attention to its road safety activities since the Ministry shoulders the responsibility of making the NH network safer across the country. Remedial measures may be taken at the earliest in order to ensure optimal utilization of the allocation made under this during FY 22-23.

(Para 95)

The Committee notes the various measures taken by the Ministry to bolster road safety on NHs across the country. A huge number of road accident deaths and the resultant negative effect of the same on the economic growth potential of the country is immense. Keeping this in mind, a lot more still needs to be done in order to minimize the number of road accidents and deaths happening in the country. The Committee feels that besides high-quality maintenance of National Highways and implementation of safety measures therein, having well-trained and educated drivers on our NHs holds the key to improving the driving habits of the average Indian driver and making them more aware of traffic rules and the need for adhering to them. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry may request the Ministry of Education to seriously consider the inclusion of lessons to spread awareness about good driving habits, traffic laws, good samaritan law etc., at the school level itself. The Committee further recommends that the scheme for cashless treatment of road accident victims may be finalized at the earliest.

(Para 100)

The Committee feels that the steadily increasing volume of calls being received on the NH Helpline Number 1033 speaks for the increasing awareness about the same among general public. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may strive to further increase awareness about the helpline numbers through various means, both offline and online.

(Para 102)

SCHEME ON WOMEN SAFETY

The Committee notes that seven States/UTs (Haryana, NCT of Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Lakshadweep) have not opted for the scheme despite several reminders. It is difficult to understand the lethargic response of so many States towards such a scheme, which, if implemented, will definitely help improve the state of women's safety. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may try to raise this issue with these States'/UTs' Governments/Administration at the highest level and try to understand the reasons behind their disinterest in the implementation of the scheme in their respective State/UT.

(Para 106)

The Committee further notes that the Ministry has stated that no separate proposal has been received from States for the public transport scheme under the Nirbhaya Framework, as the reason behind the drastic reduction of 80 percent in the BE 2022-23 allocation of Rs. 20 crores under the head 'Scheme on Women Safety on Public Road Transport', against BE 2021-22 allocation of Rs. 100 crores. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may come up with more effective schemes to improve the state of safety of women on National Highways and in public transportation.

(Para 107)

The Committee adds that basic safety measures such as proper signages, streetlights, highway patrol at frequent distances etc. are often found to be lacking on National Highways. The Committee is of the view that ensuring such measures is not budget-intensive and feels that there is an urgent, pressing need to ensure that these very basic measures are enforced across the entire NH stretch in the country. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommends that the Ministry may conduct road safety audits across the entire stretch of NHs and ensure proper signages, streetlights and highway patrol. This would not only help women travelling on NHs feel safer, especially at night, but also boost the overall safety of the road passengers at large. Signages may prominently display helpline numbers for different emergencies in English, Hindi as well as local language.

(Para 108)

The Committee also points out the total lack of mobile network connectivity for large stretches of National Highways. The Committee feels that having no mobile network connectivity for extended stretches of NHs is a serious cause of concern since the same would mean issues would be faced in connecting to emergency services as well. Besides the safety aspect, the Committee feels that having basic mobile connectivity while travelling is getting more and more important in the modern times, with navigational services and several other forms of important communications rely on on-the-go mobile connectivity. While it is understood that the installation of cell towers is carried out by telecommunication companies on the basis of the number of users in the area, the Committee feels that given the high volume of traffic plying on National Highways across

the country, many such stretches might be having sufficient demand from users for good internet connectivity. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry may look into this matter and if feasible, suitable measures may be taken to ensure good mobile connectivity for NH users, in coordination with the Department of Telecommunications and other organizations concerned.

(Para 109)

SCHEMES OF STATES AND UTs FINANCED FROM CRIF

The Committee is surprised to note that road projects pertaining to only 10 States/UTs have been approved under the heads ‘Schemes of States financed from CRIF’ and ‘Schemes of UTs financed from CRIF’ during the ongoing FY 2021-22. The Committee desires to be apprised of the reasons behind the same. The Committee has submitted a detailed report on CRIF. The recommendation made in that report may be followed scrupulously.

(Para 111)

MISCELLANEOUS

Indian Roads Congress and Central Road Research Institute

The Committee observes that the construction of National Highways is carried out as per the standards and specifications laid down in various IRC standards. It is evident that the codes and standards published by IRC are of extreme significance, with the quality of construction of NHs across the country directly dependent on the same. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry may submit information regarding the various issues being faced at present in construction of NHs in the country to the committee set up by IRC to aid in its exercise for identification of important pilot research projects and ensure that sufficient allocation is made available to IRC in order to carry out such projects through eminent research organizations and academic institutions of repute.

(Para 113)

The Committee observes that the activities carried out by CRRI are of great significance for the effective development and maintenance of an intricate road network in India through its activities pertaining to Research and Development in the road sector as well as its national and international training programmes for capacity building of human resources in the area of highway engineering. The Committee expresses its apprehensions that since CRRI is a constituent of CSIR, which is an autonomous body under the administrative supervision of the Ministry of Science and Technology, there might be a lack of cohesive and concerted efforts between CRRI and the R&D and HR training institutes of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways viz., IAHE, IRC and NHAI's SRD&Q Division. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may ensure that sufficient budgetary allocation is made available to fund the activities carried out by CRRI, IRC, SRD&Q Division and IAHE so as to bolster the R&D and HR training aspects of the Indian road sector. Efforts may also be made to ensure that there is strong coordination between all these agencies to complement each other's efforts for the overall improvement of the road sector in the country. The knowledge gained by these research and training agencies may be freely shared with the various road construction agencies in the country, including State PWDs.

(Para 115)

The Committee recommends that IRC may collaborate with CRRI and conduct research on usage of innovative materials for road construction and strengthening road safety through improved design and construction techniques, particularly looking into road accidents that take place at entry and exit points of highways.

(Para 116)

Provisions for service roads

The Committee observes that the lack of service roads alongside National Highways causes inconvenience to local residents and is, at times, the cause of road accidents. The land required for development of National Highways is acquired from the local people and they should be given the benefits of service roads along National Highways. The Committee feels that service roads are an integral part of National Highways and therefore, recommends that the Ministry may make it mandatory to have service roads along NHs to the extent

possible and provisions for the same may be included in the tender document for NH projects.

(Para 117)

Five Year Vision Plan for Infrastructure Sector

The Committee recommends that the Ministry may take undertake concerted measures to achieve the ambitious goals laid out in the Five Year Vision Plan (2019-24) for Infrastructure Sector, prepared by the Sectoral Group of Secretaries, which include targeting reduction of accident fatalities by at least 25%, strengthening public transport and shared mobility through regulatory reforms, strengthening connectivity to top 100 tourist destinations, development of helipads near Highways for victim evacuation and commercial purposes, development of contractors database to identify underperformers and habitual litigants, etc. A robust monitoring mechanism may be put in place in order to assess the progress being made in regard of all the goals and targets laid out under the Five Year Vision Plan.

(Para 118)

CAG Audit Paras

The Committee is distressed to note that the reply is awaited from NHAI and matter is pending with the Ministry relating to CAG Audit Paras dating back to as far back as 2017. The Committee strongly recommends that the Ministry and NHAI may take immediate action based on observations made by CAG in its Reports since time lost in such matters can cause loss of valuable information which could otherwise pinpoint culprits involved in giving undue benefits to concessionaires or causing loss of revenue to NHAI.

(Para 120)

Awarding of road projects

The Committee recommends that the Ministry may start maintaining a score of performance of road concessionaires across the country based on the construction quality, timely completion etc. of the road projects worked upon by them. This database based on work history of road concessionaires may be used as one of the criterias based on which

new road projects are awarded, giving priority to concessionaires with excellent project history as long as their financial capacities allow the same.

(Para 125)

The Committee takes serious view of the issues pointed out by one of its Members regarding the possible connivance of the officials, concessionaires and consultants etc. which leads to poor quality NHs being constructed across the country. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may set up an enquiry committee to look into the above mentioned issues and to devise a mechanism to plug the loopholes present in the existing system which may be leading to the possibility of such corrupt practices. The Committee further recommends that the Ministry may review the requirements presently in place to effectuate a change of scope in a road project and ensure that change of scope is permitted only in rare cases where alternative solutions are not possible.

(Para 127)

The Committee desires to know the number of road projects awarded in which a ‘Change of Scope’ has happened during the last 5 years and the total number of road projects awarded during this period. Similarly, the Committee may be apprised of the number of road projects which have been awarded for more than 20 percent below the official estimated cost and underwent a ‘Change of Scope’ during the last 5 years; and the total number of road projects which have been awarded for more than 20 percent below the official estimated during this period.

(Para 128)

The Committee recommends that the Ministry may examine the feasibility of prescribing upper/lower limits for submission of bids for road projects. Till the time that is done, or if the same is not found to be a feasible alternative, the Ministry may establish a specialized mechanism for closer scrutiny of the road projects that are awarded at substantially lower bids than the official estimates of the Ministry/NHAI.

(Para 129)

Promotion of Electric Vehicles

The Committee notes the steps taken by the Ministry for promotion of electric vehicles in the country and feels that a lot still needs to be done in order to speed up the shift of vehicle-owners towards electric vehicles since EVs come with a huge set of benefits, especially in light of the dire air pollution issues faced in a large number of Indian cities. The shift to electric vehicles will also reduce the dependency of our country on petroleum product imports. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry may take more steps to promote the usage of electric vehicles in the country and work on creation of charging infrastructure for the same alongside National Highways, in coordination with concerned Ministries/organizations. The Ministry may also consider exempting electric vehicles from road tax, offering some discount at toll plazas. The Ministry should work towards undertaking initiatives to boost and promote the production of electric vehicles in the country should also be taken, in close cooperation with concerned Ministries/Departments as well as vehicle manufacturers.

(Para 131)

Driving Training Centres

The Committee desires to be apprised of the number of districts in the country where Driving Training Centres are functional and the number of applications received and approved by the Ministry so far for the one-time assistance scheme for setting up of model DTCs in the country.

(Para 134)

Laying of integrated utility corridors along greenfield National Highways

The Committee is glad to note that bids have been invited for laying OFC ducts for a total length of about 1350 km. The Committee hopes that the Ministry will utilize the experience gained from this exercise to make provisions for utility ducts alongside more upcoming Greenfield Highways/ Expressways.

(Para 137)

Weigh-in-Motion Systems at Toll Plazas

The Committee recommends that a timeline may be devised to equip the remaining toll plazas on NHs with Weigh-in-Motion systems as well and the details of the timeline may be shared with the Committee, since the system can help curb the practice of overloaded

vehicles which not only cause damage to NHs, but also pose great safety risks to other vehicles.

(Para 139)

Flyovers over Highways

The Committee would like to know from the Ministry the reasons for lifting the existing MDR/ODR/VR over National Highways instead of lifting the multi-lane NHs over the MDR/ODR/VR.

(Para 141)

MINUTES

XV

FIFTEENTH MEETING

The Committee met at 11:00 A.M. on Wednesday, the 16th February, 2022 in the Main Committee Room, Ground Floor, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

Members present:

1. Shri T. G. Venkatesh – Chairman

RAJYA SABHA

2. Shri Prasanna Acharya
3. Smt. Priyanka Chaturvedi
4. Shri Sambhaji Chhatrapati
5. Shri Shaktisinh Gohil
6. Shri Jugalsinh Lokhandwala
7. Shri Vinay Dinu Tendulkar

LOK SABHA

8. Shri Rahul Kaswan
9. Shri Chhedi Paswan
10. Shri Sunil Kumar Pintu
11. Shri Tirath Singh Rawat
12. Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy
13. Shri Dushyant Singh
14. Shri Manoj Tiwari
15. Shri Krupal Balaji Tumane

SECRETARIAT

Shri Puneet Kumar, Joint Secretary
Shri P. Narayanan, Director
Shri Dinesh Singh, Additional Director
Shri Rajendra Prasad Shukla, Additional Director
Shri Ranajit Chakraborty, Under Secretary

WITNESSES: –

*Relates to other matters.

	*	*	*
2.	*	*	*
3.	*	*	*
4.	*	*	*
5.	*	*	*
6.	*	*	*

(The witnesses then withdrew)

(The Committee re-assembled after lunch break)

WITNESSES: –

Ministry of Road Transport and Highways

- (i) Shri Giridhar Aramane, Secretary;
- (ii) Shri Sanjay Kumar, Additional Secretary & Financial Adviser;
- (iii) Shri S.K. Nirmal, Nodal officer;
- (iv) Shri Ravi Prasad, Additional Director General;
- (v) Shri Kamlesh Chaturvedi, Joint Secretary;
- (vi) Shri Mahmood Ahmed, Joint Secretary;
- (vii) Shri Suman Prasad Singh, Joint Secretary;
- (viii) Shri Sudip Choudhary, Chief Engineer;
- (ix) Shri O.P. Shrivastava, Chief Engineer; and
- (x) Shri Rajesh Kumar, Superintending Engineer and others.

National Highways Authority of India

- (i) Shri R.K. Pandey, Member;
- (ii) Shri Manoj Kumar, Member;
- (iii) Shri NRVVMK Rajendra Kumar, Member; and
- (iv) Shri Mahabir singh, Member.

National Highways and Infrastructure Development

- (i) Shri Chanchal Kumar, Managing Director.

*Relates to other matters.

6. At the outset, the Chairman welcomed the Members of the Committee and the Secretary along with other senior officials of the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways to the meeting and informed them of the agenda for the meeting i.e. to examine and deliberate on the Demands for Grants (2022–23) of the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways. The Chairman then asked the Ministry to apprise the Committee of the reasons for the increase in B.E. 2022–23 allocation and the proposals chalked by both the Ministry and National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) for efficient utilization of such amount. He asked the Ministry to apprise the Committee of reasons for reduction in B.E. 2022–23 under the head Maintenance of National Highways–Financed from CRIF, main budgetary highlights of the F.Y. 2022–23 and plans of the Ministry to face the major cuts affected in the allocation for R.E. 2021–22. Whether the Ministry has taken up/proposes to take up major initiatives to tackle future budgetary issues. He also asked the Ministry to apprise the Committee of the details of duration and cost overruns of its delayed National Highways (NH) projects and plans formulated to overcome such delays. He inquired the Ministry on various issues, namely, identification and rectification of Black spots/accident prone spots on NHs, steps taken to improve road safety, progress made in the development of Multi Modal Logistics Parks (MMLPs), last mile port–road connectivity projects under Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase–1, provision of tax benefits on purchase of electric vehicles, widening of roads, emergency helipads/heliports for helicopter/drone–ambulance landing at NHs, policymaking for revenue generation through land acquisition and utilization at NHs, etc.

7. Through its Presentation, the Ministry informed the Committee that 783 nodes of economic importance out of the identified 860 have been connected to NHs across the country under the PM Gati Shakti Master Plan. The Ministry is planning to take up 22 Greenfield NHs connecting 801 unique transport nodes through corridors under Bharatmala Pariyojana Phases–I and II. The Committee was informed that against the projected demand of ₹ 1,57,384.55 Cr., the Ministry has been given ₹ 1,99,108 Cr. in the B.E. 2022–23. The expenditure of the Ministry is ₹ 1,02,025 Cr. (till 31st January, 2022) against the R.E. 2021–22 of ₹ 1,31,149 Cr. NHAI has raised ₹ 65,000 Cr. through Internal & External Budgetary (IEBR) sources in the F.Y. 2021–22. The Committee was informed of the Ministry's future targets such as efficient freight movement through MMLPs, seamless cargo movement from roads to ports, awarding 600 odd sites till 2024–25, ropeway connectivity to remote regions under Parvatmala Scheme etc.

8. Elaborating the physical achievements of the Ministry, the Secretary informed the Committee of the increase in total length of the National Highways (NHs) network from 91,287 km (as on April, 2014) to 1,41,190 km in 2022. The Ministry has planned to raise ₹ 20,000 Cr. through monetizing public–funded NHs via Tolling, Operation, Maintenance & Transfer (ToT) model, ₹ 15,000 Cr. by Special Purpose Vehicles (SPV), ₹ 10,000 by InvIT and ₹ 30,000 Cr. by Private investments.

9. The Committee was apprised that 35 MMLP projects worth ₹ 46,000 Cr. have been identified with a goal to handle 700 MMT (Million Metric Tonnes) cargo, out of which one has been awarded and 15 will be awarded by F.Y. 2024. The Ministry has also prioritized eight Ropeway projects worth ₹ 4,000 Cr. to develop 60 km length under the Parvatmala Scheme under which Kedarnath and Hemkund are in progress. The Committee was further

apprised of the efforts made by the Ministry in development and implementation of development of 34,800 km NH network and 22 Greenfield Corridors of 8,424 km under the Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase-1 projects, construction of 6,000 km NHs worth ₹ 44,961 Cr. under Special Accelerated Road Development Program for North-Eastern region (SARDP-NE), completion of 5,000 km of road development out of targeted 5,400 km under the Special Program for Development of Roads in the Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas, 1,300 km road construction out of targeted 2,900 km roads worth ₹ 37,000 Cr under the Externally Aided Project (EAP), improving connectivity with 861 nodes identified under the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan out of targeted 12,000 km, ensuring vehicular safety through built-in safety features, Green initiatives for a cleaner environment under the Vahan – Sarathi Scheme by capturing data of 29 Cr. vehicles and 19 Cr. licenses, formulation of guidelines on Accredited Driving Training Centres and Automated Test Station (ATS) for vehicular fitness check, deployment of 710 ambulances near NH toll plazas for emergency needs, extending cash awards under the Good Samaritan Scheme to the stakeholders working for road safety etc.

10. Members raised various queries/issues, namely, construction of 8-lane roads for optimizing safety and road network, lack of funding and proper planning for Indian Roads Congress (IRC), monitoring and repairing road potholes through a portal, policymaking on utility corridors and service lanes, blacklisting contractors responsible for bad construction material and improper maintenance of roads, provision of public amenities on NHs, etc.

11. The Secretary, MoRTH responded to the queries raised by the Chairman and Members of the Committee. The Chairman then directed the Secretary to furnish written

replies to other queries/points/issues raised by him and the Members of the Committee, which could not be replied during the meeting, to the Secretariat.

(The witnesses then withdrew)

12. A verbatim record of the proceedings of the meeting was kept.
13. The meeting adjourned at 05:08 P.M.

XVIII

EIGHTEENTH MEETING

The Committee met at 02:30 P.M. on Monday, the 7th March, 2022 in Committee Room – 139, First Floor, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

Members present:

1. **Shri T.G. Venkatesh** – **Chairman**

RAJYA SABHA

2. Shrimati Priyanka Chaturvedi
3. Shri Shaktisinh Gohil
4. Shri Tiruchi Siva
5. Shri Vinay Dinu Tendulkar

LOK SABHA

6. Shri Rahul Kaswan
7. Shri Sunil Baburao Mendhe
8. Shri Prince Raj
9. Shri Ramdas C. Tadas
10. Shri Krupal Balaji Tumane

SECRETARIAT

Shri Puneet Kumar, Joint Secretary
Shri Swarabji B., Director
Shri Rajendra Prasad Shukla, Additional Director
Shrimati Subha Chandrashekar, Deputy Secretary
Shri Ranajit Chakraborty, Under Secretary

At the outset, the Chairman extended a very warm welcome to the Members of the Committee. He informed them that the agenda for the meeting is to consider and adopt the following Draft Reports on:-

- (i) * * *

*Relates to other matters.

(ii) * * *

(iii) * * *

(iv) Three Hundred Seventeenth Report on Demands for Grants (2022-23) of Ministry of Road Transport & Highways; and

(v) * * *

2. The Committee suggested some minor changes in the abovementioned draft Reports. The Committee authorized the Secretariat to carry out the changes. The Committee, thereafter, adopted the draft Reports alongwith some minor modifications/additions.
3. The Committee also authorized the Chairman, and in his absence, Shri Tiruchi Siva, M.P., to present the Reports in Rajya Sabha. Shri Sunil Baburao Mendhe, M.P. and in his absence, Shri Prince Raj, M.P. was authorized to lay the abovementioned Reports on the Table of Lok Sabha on 14th March, 2022.
4. The Committee further decided to hear the representatives of the Ministries of Tourism and External Affairs on the Subject 'Role of Indian Missions globally for the growth of Tourism in India' in its next meeting.
5. The meeting adjourned at 03:40 P.M.

*Relates to other matters.

ANNEXURE

LIST OF WITNESSES WHO APPEARED BEFORE THE DEPARTMENT-RELATED PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT, TOURISM AND CULTURE

Dated: 16.02.2022

Ministry of Road Transport and Highways

- (xi) Shri Giridhar Aramane, Secretary;
- (xii) Shri Sanjay Kumar, Additional Secretary & Financial Adviser;
- (xiii) Shri S.K. Nirmal, Nodal officer;
- (xiv) Shri Ravi Prasad, Additional Director General;
- (xv) Shri Kamlesh Chaturvedi, Joint Secretary;
- (xvi) Shri Mahmood Ahmed, Joint Secretary;
- (xvii) Shri Suman Prasad Singh, Joint Secretary;
- (xviii) Shri Sudip Choudhary, Chief Engineer;
- (xix) Shri O.P. Shrivastava, Chief Engineer; and
- (xx) Shri Rajesh Kumar, Superintending Engineer and others.

National Highways Authority of India

- (v) Shri R.K. Pandey, Member;
- (vi) Shri Manoj Kumar, Member;
- (vii) Shri NRVVMK Rajendra Kumar, Member; and
- (viii) Shri Mahabir singh, Member.

National Highways and Infrastructure Development

- (ii) Shri Chanchal Kumar, Managing Director.