

NDA gov't's five big bets on infrastructure

Narendra Modi-led NDA government is trying to get 5 major infrastructure projects completed before its tenure ends to showcase major infrastructure achievements



Eastern Peripheral Expressway under construction in Mohana village of Faridabad, Haryana. Photo: Pradeep Gaur/ Mint

New Delhi: With just two years left for its term, the Narendra Modi-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government is working hard on a few projects that they can showcase as their major infrastructure achievements. These projects from roads and railway sectors are being implemented with strict deadlines to ensure their completion on time. Here's a look at NDA's five big bets on infrastructure:

Char Dham Mahamarg Vikas Pariyojana or Char Dham Highway Development project: Under the project, the government plans to develop around 900 km of national highways in Uttarakhand at an approximate cost of Rs12,000 crore. The national highway, which would be an all-weather road, is slated to be completed by 2018 and aims to improve connectivity among the pilgrimage centres of Kedarnath, Badrinath, Gangotri and Yamunotri. The road ministry plans to improve the stretches by widening them to two-lane carriageway and protecting the road from landslide hazards by constructing bypasses, bridges, tunnels and elevated roads.

Peripheral Expressway Project: It is the first access control expressway of the country comprising of two expressways—Western

Peripheral Expressway (WPE) and Eastern Peripheral Expressway (EPE)—that would be connecting national highway 1 and 2 from the western and eastern side of Delhi, respectively. The two expressways will form a ring road around Delhi with a total length of 270 km and will allow a bypass for traffic not meant for Delhi and headed towards the neighbouring states of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. The project will decongest Delhi and is being built at a cost of over Rs11,000 crore. The government plans to inaugurate EPE by end of 2017.

Habibganj Station Re-development: Habibganj railway station in Madhya Pradesh is the first station in the country to be redeveloped at a cost of Rs450 crore. The project involves modernization and upgradation of passenger amenities like lifts, escalators, travellers and subways. The station will be developed on the airport model with separate arrival and departure areas and dedicated parking facilities. The station will generate solar energy on its premises. The station's management was handed over to a private firm on 1 March and they are supposed to complete the project within three years. The station will become a model for the ambitious NDA government project of redeveloping 400 railway stations across the country. Habibganj has emerged as the first railway station of the Indian Railways to be managed by a private party.

Chenab Bridge: The Chenab bridge over river Chenab in Jammu and Kashmir is the world's highest bridge which is expected to be 35 metres taller than the Eiffel Tower. The arch bridge is 4,314 feet long and is 1,178 feet above the river on the Kauri side. The bridge has been designed to withstand wind speeds of up to 260 km per hour and is being termed as an engineering marvel that will connect Bakkal (Katra) and Kauri (Srinagar). It is being built at a cost of around Rs1,100 crore. The bridge was scheduled to be completed in 2009 but the construction was cancelled due to some safety and stability issues. The reconstruction started in 2010 and the present government wants it to be completed by 2019.

Zojila Pass tunnel: Zojila Pass tunnel in Jammu and Kashmir is one of the key projects that the NDA government wants to launch during its tenure. The Rs6,000 crore project aims to provide all-weather connectivity between Kashmir and Ladakh which remains cut off from the rest of the world during winters due to heavy snowfall. The project has been bid several times but has been in controversy due to either no bidders coming forward or charges of "favouritism".