



101st Meeting of Network Planning Group under PM GatiShakti evaluates key Infrastructure projects

NPG evaluates projects from Ministry of Road, Transport & Highways (MoRTH), Ministry of Railways (MoR)

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The 101st meeting of the Network Planning Group (NPG) was convened today to evaluate infrastructure projects related to Roads, Transport & Highways, and Railways. The discussions focused on strengthening multimodal connectivity and improving logistics efficiency in alignment with the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan (PMGS NMP).

The NPG evaluated projects of Road/Highway of MoRTH and Rail projects of MoR, for their conformity to the PM GatiShakti principles of integrated multimodal infrastructure, last-mile connectivity to economic and social nodes and 'Whole of Government' approach. These initiatives are expected to boost logistics efficiency, reduce travel times, and deliver significant socio-economic benefits to the catchment areas of the project. The evaluation and anticipated impacts of these projects are detailed below:

Ministry of Road, Transport & Highways (MoRTH)

i. Rehabilitation and Upgradation of NH-160A from Ghoti to Palghar (Maharashtra)

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has proposed the rehabilitation and upgradation of National Highway 160A (NH-160A) from Ghoti to Palghar, spanning a total length of 154.635 kilometers in the state of Maharashtra. The NH-160A corridor serves as a strategic alternate freight route connecting the industrial clusters of Nashik and adjoining MIDC areas (Ambad and Satpur) to the western coastal ports, significantly reducing dependence on existing routes passing through Nashik city. The proposed upgradation will enable efficient port access, decongest urban corridors, and enhance freight mobility for industrial and commercial traffic. The project will also strengthen intermodal connectivity by improving linkages with nearby railheads (Nashik, Palghar, and Dahanu railway lines) and major highways including NH-60, NH-48, and NH-848, ensuring improved last-mile connectivity for both passenger and freight movement.

The upgradation of NH-160A is expected to deliver multiple benefits, including:

- Development of a high-capacity alternate freight corridor, linking Nashik's industrial hubs with western ports and markets in Palghar.
- Improved access to the Nashik Multi-Modal Logistics Park (MMLP) and other port-bound economic corridors.
- Faster transport of perishable goods, supporting cold-chain and agricultural value chains.
- Promotion of tourism and MSME growth in regional centers such as Trimbak, Jawhar, Manor, and Palghar.

Overall, the project will enhance regional logistics efficiency, improve industrial competitiveness, and promote balanced socio-economic development across northern and western Maharashtra, while strengthening connectivity to major trade and port hubs.

ii. Development of 2-Lane with Paved Shoulder from Hiwarkhedi to Basinda-Roshni (Betul – Khandwa)

Development of 2/4 lane with paved shoulder of Ashapur to Rudhy (Betul – Khandwa) (Madhya Pradesh)

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has proposed the development of a 2-lane carriageway with paved shoulders from Hiwarkhedi to Basinda-Roshni, and the widening of the existing 2-lane road to a 4-lane divided carriageway with paved shoulders from Deshgaon to Julwaniya, in the state of Madhya Pradesh. The proposed corridor covers a total length of approximately 300 kilometers. The project corridor serves as a strategic arterial route, enhancing interstate connectivity and linking cities of national importance across Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Rajasthan. It will improve regional linkages with major urban centers such as Udaipur, Jhalawar (Rajasthan); Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Bharuch (Gujarat); Nashik, Dhule, Aurangabad, Amravati, Akola (Maharashtra); and Indore, Ujjain, Bhopal, and Khandwa (Madhya Pradesh).

The corridor will provide an alternate and shorter route between Nagpur and Vadodara, thereby facilitating efficient movement of freight and passenger traffic across central and western India. Upgradation of the project road will also improve access to key industrial and economic zones, including District Trade and Industry Centre in Barwani, Anjad, Khargone, and Bhikangaon, as well as the NTPC Super Thermal Power Station at Selda, Khargone.

The project is expected to boost regional trade, enhance logistics efficiency, and support industrial development by strengthening connectivity between production centers, markets, and ports. It will also contribute to reduced travel time, lower transportation costs, and improved access to key economic and administrative centers. Overall, the proposed development will serve as a catalyst for economic growth, promoting balanced socio-economic development and strengthening regional connectivity across Madhya Pradesh and adjoining states.

Ministry of Railways(MoR)

iii. 3rd & 4th line from Gamharia to Chandil (Jharkhand)

The Ministry of Railways has proposed the construction of a 3rd and 4th railway line between Gamharia and Chandil in the state of Jharkhand, spanning a total length of 56 kilometers.

The project aims to address severe congestion in the existing Kandra-Chandil section, which is currently operating at 130%-line capacity utilization, including maintenance blocks. Forecasts indicate that capacity utilization may reach 141% in the near future, highlighting the urgent

requirement for capacity augmentation to ensure smoother and more efficient train operations. The Gamharia–Chandil corridor is a critical freight route, facilitating the movement of iron ore and raw materials from the Chakradharpur Division to steel plants at Burnpur and Durgapur, as well as sponge iron industries in the Asansol region. The section plays a vital role in supporting the industrial supply chain and mineral logistics across eastern India. With a maximum permissible speed of 130 km/h on the existing line, the proposed expansion will further enhance operational efficiency and throughput capacity.

Upon completion, the project will significantly increase line capacity, reduce congestion, and enhance freight movement efficiency. It will also strengthen connectivity for industrial and mineral-based freight corridors, improving logistics performance and supporting the economic growth of eastern India.

iv. 4th Line from Sainthia-Pakur (West Bengal & Jharkhand)

The Ministry of Railways has proposed the construction of a 4th railway line between Sainthia and Pakur, covering a total length of approximately 81.20 kilometers across the states of West Bengal and Jharkhand. The project aims to augment line capacity and reduce congestion on the existing busy corridor, ensuring efficient movement of both freight and passenger traffic. The section has been designated as an “Energy Corridor”, highlighting its strategic role in supporting industrial supply chains and power sector logistics in eastern India. The corridor traverses a region with substantial untapped freight potential, particularly from industrial clusters that currently rely on road transport. The introduction of the 4th line will facilitate a modal shift from road to rail, enhancing cost efficiency, reliability, and sustainability in freight movement. The proposed expansion will lead to improved train punctuality, higher average freight speeds, and optimal utilization of rolling stock and crew resources, thereby generating significant operational savings by minimizing detention of goods trains.

The project will have a positive impact on several major industries and facilities, including:

- Power plants operated by WBPDCCL – Santhaldih, Bakreswar, and Sagardighi Thermal Power Stations;
- Cement plants – Ambuja Cement (Tildanga) and Ultratech Cement (Sonar Bangla Unit);
- Mining operations – Stone mines, Rajmahal Coalfield, and Pachwara Coal Block.

Additionally, the project will strengthen rail-based logistics for iron and steel industries, chemical plants, thermal power stations, and mining operations, contributing to the region’s industrial growth, energy security, and logistics efficiency.

Upon completion, the Sainthia–Pakur 4th Line Project will play a pivotal role in enhancing freight mobility, supporting industrial expansion, and boosting economic development across eastern India. The meeting was chaired by Joint Secretary, Logistics, Department for Promotion of Industry, and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Shri Pankaj Kumar.

Abhishek Dayal/Shabbir Azad/Anushka Pandey

