



NHAI Introduces Independent Checking of Designs of Major Bridges and Critical National Highway Structures

Initiative to introduce a uniform mechanism to improve safety, quality and durability of critical structures on National Highways

Posted On: 15 OCT 2026 5:02PM by PIB Delhi

To strengthen structural safety, durability and quality assurance of the National Highway projects, National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has introduced a uniform system for independent checking of designs and drawings of major bridges and other critical structures being built under its projects. Under the new policy, the designs of identified critical structures will be independently checked by empanelled Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), reputed government technical institutions and other experienced technical firms having expertise in bridge engineering and hydraulic studies.

The initiative is particularly important for major bridges and other complex structures. Independent checking will help identify possible design-related issues at an early stage and ensure that structures meet the applicable Indian Roads Congress (IRC) codes, technical specifications and contractual requirements.

Structures to be covered

The policy covers major bridges and viaducts, including major river bridges with a design discharge of 3,000 cubic metres per second or more, and structures or bridges having an individual effective span of 40 metres or more. Other special or complex structures identified by NHAI will also be covered.

The independent checking will include structural design calculations, structural analysis, design drawings and, wherever applicable, hydrological and hydraulic studies. These studies help assess water flow, flood levels, the adequacy of openings for water to pass through and the safety of foundations against river-bed erosion.

How will the new system work?

Under the revised procedure, the contractor or concessionaire will submit the design and drawings for review or approval, as applicable under the contract. Thereafter, three institutions or firms will be proposed from NHAI's empanelled list. Based on project

requirements, one or more institutions or firms will be selected to carry out independent verification.

The selected institution or firm will independently examine the design and submit its observations and recommendations. The contractor or concessionaire will consider these observations and make the necessary changes in the design, as required. The design will then be reviewed or approved by NHAI in accordance with the applicable contractual provisions.

The policy will come into effect from 1st December 2026. It will apply to all new Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC), Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM) and Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) National Highway projects, as well as projects where design verification or proof checking has not yet commenced.

The policy will generally not apply to projects where design verification or proof checking has already been completed. However, additional independent verification may be undertaken for major bridges and complex or critical special structures.

Through this initiative, NHAI aims to establish a consistent and robust quality-assurance mechanism for critical National Highway structures that will support development of a safer and stronger National Highway infrastructure across the country.

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(Release ID: 2323906) Visitor Counter : 316

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