

**Shri Gadkari calls for urgent action to facilitate Inter-State border movement of Trucks/Lorries carrying essential goods to ease public life during COVID 19 pandemic**

**States/UTs urged to expedite land acquisition and utilise funds worth Rs 25000 crore allocated for the purpose to help regain momentum in road construction through land acquisition**

**Shri Gadkari stresses upon speeding up proactive decision-making to accelerate economic development for which transport facilities serve as backbone**

**Planning to enhance National Highway construction on a much higher scale with 2-3 times of the present level: Gadkari**

**Shri Gadkari suggests App-based two-wheeler taxi operations especially in rural areas**

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Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways and MSMEs Shri Nitin Gadkari has called upon all the States/UTs to take urgent action so that blockades of trucks and lorries at inter State/UT borders is cleared at the earliest possible, as smooth movement of essential goods to various parts of the country is essential. This, he said, needs to be given urgent attention by facilitating the truck/Lorry movement, to ease up lives of the public in the light of lockdown announced to curb COVID-19 pandemic. Speaking at the meeting of State/UT Road Transport Ministers held via Video Conference, Shri Gadkari urged the Ministers to intervene in such

matters and ensure resolutions through the local/district administrations. At the same time, he underlined following the health advisories and other guideline like proper distance, wearing masks, use of sanitizers, both by the driver/cleaners and also at the Dhabaas.

Shri Gadkari further pointed out that transportation of labour to factories etc may be facilitated by duly following the health protocols of maintaining minimum one metre distance, wearing masks, use of sanitizers, etc. He pointed out that providing food and shelter to labour may be ensured while fully observing the norms of social distancing and hygiene.

Responding to a suggestion Shri Gadkari informed that his Ministry will start a helpline to resolve the transportation issues.

Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways General (Retd) V K Singh was also present. Apart from the Transport & PWD Ministers/Dy CMs, Chief Ministers of Mizoram, Himachal Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh also attended alongwith Secretary, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, senior officers of the Ministry, NHAI, NHIDCL, etc.

Union Minister Shri Gadkari informed that he was according top priority to the development of road/highway infrastructure and is planning to enhance National Highway construction by 2 to 3 times of the present pace in next couple of years. He urged the States/UTs to expedite land acquisition as delays hamper the pace of development and asked the them to utilise funds which are remaining unused with them to the extent of about Rs 25000 crore.

Calling for speedier decision making, Shri Gadkari said this is critical for accelerated economic development to make India an Economic Super Power and 5 trillion economy. The Minister stressed that transport facilities/ infrastructure serves as the backbone of our economy. He said, the Ministers should personally monitor the process of decision making to ensure that projects do not become victim of red-tape.

Shri Gadkari suggested that State Transport Ministers should explore operationalising App-based two-wheeler taxis especially in rural areas which will assist farming communities with smoother movement. This will also provide new employment opportunities. They may also try to shift public transport to LNG/CNG, e-vehicles which will bring considerable savings on fuel bills and will help the environment being less/zero polluting fuels.

In his remarks, General(Retd) V K Singh called for greater coordination between the States and Centre which will help in faster project implementation. He, for example, pointed out no separate registration/charges should be insisted upon in case works are being shifted from one central agency to another. Such practices should be dispensed with, he said.

Different CMs/DyCMs/Ministers of Sates/UTs echoed the sentiments expressed by Shri Gadkari and requested that national highway projects in their Sates/UTs may be expedited. They assured full support in this regard. References were made to the specific projects pending in the States/UTs. The work being done by the Union Ministry of Road Transport & Highways under the Minister Shri Gadkari and MoS General (Retd) Shri V K Singh came in for special praise.

A presentation was made showing the works being carried during the lockdown period. It was stated that 1315 projects covering 49,238 kms worth Rs 5,89,648 crore were under progress, of which 819 projects covering 30,301 kms costing about Rs 3,06,250 crore were delayed. It also showed State-specific issues like pending land acquisition, environment clearance etc which have been delaying the project implementation. The participating States were suggested to take definitive steps towards mitigating the difficulties before the Highways sector.





