

NDA govt built 73% more highways than UPA's last 4 years

SURYA SARATHI RAY
New Delhi, June 12

THE NARENDRA MODI government has built around 73% more national highways in its first four years till 2017-18 compared with the last four years' in office of the previous UPA dispensation beginning 2010-11. The present government has constructed a total of 28,531 km national highways in its four years since 2014-15 as against 16,505 km by the previous government in four years till 2013-14.

One of the priority areas, the highway construction, under

the present dispensation, grew over the years to touch its highest in 2017-18 at 9,829 km followed by 8,231 km in 2016-17. The government had built 6,061 km national highways in 2015-16 and 4,410 km in 2014-15. On the other hand, in 2010-11, a total 4,500 km highways was constructed, 2,013 km in 2011-12, 5,732 km in 2012-13 and 4,260 km in 2010-11.

While the NDA government's construction averaged at 19.5 km a day since 2014-15, the UPA's average was 11.27 km from 2010-11 to 2013-14. When the Narendra Modi government took over in May 2014,

the construction rate stood at 11.67 km per day. Under the new regime, it grew to 12 km per day in 2014-15, 16.6 km per day in 2015-16, touching a record 22.5 km per day in 2016-17 and even better at 26.9 km in 2017-18.

For the current fiscal, the Nitin Gadkari-led ministry has set an ambitious target of building 45 km/day. Of the 16,418 km construction target in the whole of 2018-19, the ministry of road transport and highways (MoRTH), which builds national highways through state PWDs, will build 9,698 km followed by National Highways Authority of



India at 6,000 km and National Highways Infrastructure Devel-

opment Corporation (NHIDCL) has been entrusted with the tar-

get of building 720 km.

MoRTH implements projects via the engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) route wherein the government bears all project cost. NHAI projects are increasingly being built through the hybrid annuity model (HAM), an improved public-private partnership model in which the government bears 40% of the project cost. This innovative financial model also came up during the current regime.

Apart from this, the Modi government has taken several steps to address the problems coming in the way of highway

development. It has eased the exit policy for developers to enable them invest in new projects, expedited land acquisition, introduced one-time fund infusion scheme in languishing projects and others.

The award of highway projects, during the first four years of the NDA regime, also more than doubled to stand at 51,073 km compared with a total of 25,158 km done by the UPA government in its last four years. The target for awards in 2018-19 has been set at 20,000 km, which is about 25% more than 17,055 km awarded during 2017-18.