

NHAI plans new policy to revamp highway toll system, improve commuter experience

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The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) is considering a new policy to revamp the entire toll system to improve commuter experience.

Under the new policy, the apex body responsible for constructing and operating national highways plans to upgrade the toll system with next-generation equipment and dedicated lanes. It has hired Boston Consulting Group (BCG) to prepare a blueprint and suggest the best electronic toll systems for the country and the required infrastructure.

NHAI is experimenting with several toll techniques, including closed toll, a GPS-based system, wherein a commuter pays toll based on the distance travelled, and FASTag, an electronic system, which deducts toll fees automatically from a



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user account.

“Boston Consulting Group will suggest what kind of new-age toll booths should be built, what should be the new toll collection mechanism and what kind of infrastructure is required for the new-age toll technology. They will submit the proposed policy document in around six months,” said a senior government official,

requesting anonymity.

He added that the last revision was done in 2008, with some amendments in 2010. “However, with the launch of new-age technologies, there was a need to overhaul the complete toll process and that is what NHAI is doing.”

The ministry for road transport and highways headed by Nitin Gadkari has already intro-

duced an electronic toll system.

Since last December, all new four-wheeler manufacturers or authorised dealers were mandated to have FASTag devices fixed on the front windscreen. FASTag is a sticker affixed on the windscreen and employs Radi Frequency Identification (RFID) technology for making toll payments directly from the prepaid or savings account linked to it.

It enable commuters to drive through toll plazas without stopping for cash transactions.

NHAI operates 372 toll plazas across the country and the toll rates are revised before the start of every financial years based on the wholesale price index (WPI), which may vary from one toll plaza to another even in the same region. The revenue of NHAI through tolls has risen significantly in the last three years.

In 2015-16, toll collection was at ₹18,148.75 crore, while in 2017-18 it rose to ₹22,820.58 crore.