

9 of 44 economic corridors to be connected via expressways soon

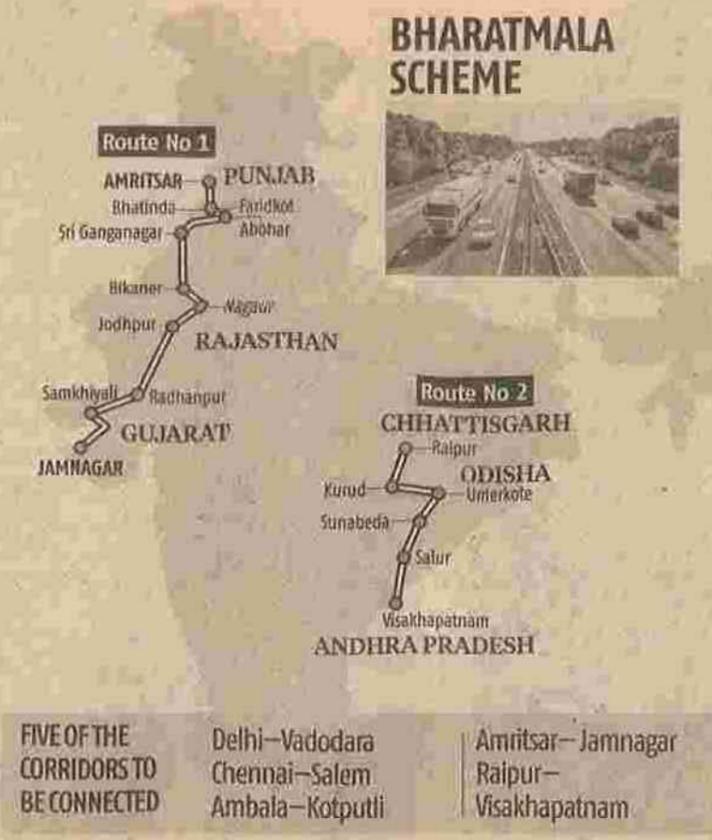
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New Delhi, 6 August

Nine of the 44 economic corridors planned under the Union government's ambitious Bharatmala scheme will soon be linked through expressways. The government intends to facilitate seamless trade by reducing the distance between connecting cities, saving cost, time, and fuel.

This exercise will be undertaken by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) and the National Highways Authority of India. "Besides building new alignments on the nine economic corridors, optimising existing expansion of roads is also a priority for us," Road Transport Secretary Y S Malik said here.

The list of nine corridors include Delhi-Vadodara, Chennai-Salem, Ambala-Kotputli, Amritsar-Jamnagar, and Raipur-Vizag. Details of the remaining corridors are being worked on.

"The new alignments on these corridors will considerably cut travel time between the two cities, thereby leading to savings of time, fuel, and carbon emissions," he said.



The distance from Delhi-Vadodara will be reduced by about 10 per cent after the new alignment is built. The current distance between the two cities is 1,033 km and there will be a reduction of 113 km after the new expressway is constructed.

Similarly, the distance

between Amritsar (Punjab) and Jamnagar (Gujarat) will be curtailed by 10 per cent, from nearly 1,430 km.

While in most cases, the distance will be slashed by about 10 per cent, in the case of Ambala in Punjab to Kotputli in Rajasthan, it will be reduced by

nearly 25 per cent.

These economic corridors have been planned for seamless trade by promoting integration between the road and rail routes. They are part of the Bharatmala Pariyojana approved by the Cabinet, last year, which involves 24,800 km of national highway development by 2021-22. These corridors also carry a high volume of traffic.

As the government envisages constructing greenfield projects, ensuring timely land acquisition will also be on the central government's priority list. For future highway projects, the MoRTH is contemplating a slightly different approach as far as land acquisition is concerned.

"We will look at acquiring land on one side of highways instead of both, while expanding the existing roads," Malik said, adding this will reduce the number of trees required to be felled for construction.

Another important aspect of the highway project execution is the detailed project report (DPR), which plays an instrumental role in the final outcome of the projects with minimal hiccups.