History of NHAI

The [National Highways Act, 1956](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=National_Highways_Act,_1956&action=edit&redlink=1)[[4]](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_highways_of_India#cite_note-4) provided for private investment in the building and maintenance of the highways.

The [National Highways Authority of India](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Highways_Authority_of_India) was established by the [National Highways Authority of India Act, 1988](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=National_Highways_Authority_of_India_Act,_1988&action=edit&redlink=1). Section 16(1) of the Act states that the function of NHAI is to develop, maintain, and manage the National Highways and any other highways vested in, or entrusted to, it by the Government of India.

In 1998 India launched a massive program of highway upgrades, called the [National Highways Development Project](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Highways_Development_Project) (NHDP), in which the main north–south and east–west corridors and highways connecting the four metropolitan cities ([Delhi](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delhi), [Mumbai](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mumbai), [Chennai](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chennai) and [Kolkata](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolkata)) have been fully paved and widened into four-lane highways. Some of the busier National Highway sectors in India were also converted to four- or six-lane limited-access highways.

The [Ministry of Road Transport and Highways](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ministry_of_Road_Transport_and_Highways) adopted a new systematic numbering of National Highways in April 2010.[[5]](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_highways_of_India#cite_note-renumber1-5) It is a systematic numbering scheme based on the orientation and the geographic location of the highway. The new system indicates the direction of National Highways whether they are east–west (odd numbers) or north–south (even numbers). It also indicates the geographical region where they are with even numbers increasing from east to west starting from NH2 and odd numbers increasing from north to south starting from NH1.[[6]](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_highways_of_India#cite_note-indiatimes3-6)

A number of roads were laid during the Sultanate and Mughal periods. Most of the present trunk routes follow the Mughal routes. These routes were essential for strengthening and consolidating the empire.

One such road was constructed by Sher Shah Suri which connected Peshawar to Kolkata. It was named as Grand Trunk (G.T.) Road and joined Amritsar with Kolkata after partition of India in 1947. Presently, it is known as ‘Sher Shah Suri Marg’.

### Importance of Roads:

1. Roads play a very important role in the transportation of goods and passengers for short and medium distances.

:2. It is comparatively easy and cheap to construct and maintain roads.

3. Road transport system establishes easy contact between farms, fields, factories and markets and provides door to door service.

4. Roads can negotiate high gradients and sharp turns which railways cannot do. As such, roads can be constructed in hilly areas also.

5. Roads act as great feaders to railways. Without good and sufficient roads, railways cannot collect sufficient produce to make their operation possible

6. Road transport is more flexible than the railway transport. Buses and trucks may be stopped anywhere and at any time on the road for loading and unloading passengers and goods whereas trains stop only at particular stations.

7. Perishable commodities like vegetables, fruits and milk are transported more easily and quickly by roads than by railways.

### Growth and Development:

Road transport in modern sense i.e. vehicles driven by internal combustion engines using petrol or diesel as fuel was practically negligible in India before World War II. Following plans have been drawn to develop roadways in India.

#### Nagpur Plan:

#### 2. Twenty Year Plan:

After achieving the objectives of the Nagpur Plan, another plan known as Twenty Year Road Plan was drawn in 1961. It aimed at increasing the road length from 6.56 lakh km to 10.60 lakh km and the density to 32 km of road per 100 sq km by 1981.

The other objectives of the Twenty Year Road Plan were (i) to bring every village in a developed agricultural area within 6.4 km of a metalled road and 2.4 km of any other road, (ii) to bring every village in a semi-developed area within 12.8 km of a metalled road and (iii) to bring every village in an undeveloped and uncultivated area within 19.2 km of a metalled road and 8 km of any other road

3. The Rural Development Plan includes construction of rural roads under Minimum Needs Programme (MNP), Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP), Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY) and Command Area Development (CAD) programmes to connect all villages having a population of 1,500 or more with all weather roads and those having less than 1,500 population with a link roads.

4. Build Operate Transfer (ВОТ) is a scheme under which private operators are invited to construct roads and bridges. They are allowed to collect toll tax from the vehicles using these roads and bridges for a specific period of time after which these assets are transferred to the government. The National Highways Act has been amended to facilitate private investment in real construction under ВОТ scheme.

5. Central Road Fund (CRF) is being raised for the betterment of roads by imposing additional excise/customs duty at the rate of Rs. 1.50 per litre on petrol with effect from 2 June 1998 and on High Speed Diesel (HSD) with effect from February 28, 1999. The annual accrual through this sources will be about Rs. 5,500 crore. A part of this (Rs. 0.4 per litre against sale of high speed diesel oil and Rs 0.86 per litre against sale of petrol) goes to fund the NHDP.

The Central Road Fund Act 2000 was enacted in December, 2000 with the primary objective of providing regular and adequate flow of funds for development of the road sector.

### **Classification of Roads:**

The main significance of the Nagpur Plan lies in the fact that it classified roads into four categories on the functional basis. They are: (i) National Highways (ii) State Highways (iii) District Roads and (iv) Village Roads. A brief description of each category is given as under:

#### 1. National Highways:

The main roads which are constructed and maintained by the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) are known as the National Highways. These roads are meant for inter-state and strategic defence movements and connect the state capitals, big cities, important ports, big railway junctions and link up with border roads.

The length of National Highways increased from 19,811 km in 1951 to 33,650 km in 1991 and 49,585 km in 1999. Currently, the total length of the National Highways in India is 65,569 kilometres. National Highways form the lifeline of road transport and constitute the framework of road system in India. Although the percentage share of the National Highways to the total road length has decreased considerably from 4.95 per cent in 1951 to only 1.96 per cent in 1999, they carry nearly 40 per cent of the road traffic of India.

**Distribution of National Highways:**

A number of national highways run across the country in all directions linking important places to one another. The historically important Sher Shah Sun Marg is known as National Highway 1. It links Delhi and Amritsar. National Highway 2 links Delhi and Kolkata. National Highway 3 runs between Agra and Mumbai via Gwalior, Indore and Nasik.

National Highway 7 is the longest one which links Varanasi with Kanniyakumari via Jabalpur, Nagpur, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Madurai. It traverses a distance of 2,325 km. National Highway 5 and 17 run along the eastern and western coasts respectively.

**. Golden Quadrilateral Super Highway:**

National Highways Development Project (NHDP) has taken up a massive programme of road building in the country. Launched on January 2, 1999, this is perhaps one of the largest programmes of road development ever taken up in the country. The project is being implemented by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). NHDP has following two components.

**(i) Phase I — Golden Quaderilateral:**

Comprising National Highways connecting Delhi — Mumbai—Chennai—Kolkata—Delhi by six-lane super highways. This component has a total length of 5,846 km of which 1,326 km length has already been completed.

The four sides of the quadrilateral have varying length. The side of quadrilateral between Delhi and Mumbai is 1419 km long, Mumbai to Chennai is 1,290 km long, Chennai to Kolkata is the longest side which is 1,684 km long. The side between Kolkata and Delhi is 1,453 km long.

**(ii) Phase II—North-South Corridor:**

Comprising the National Highways connecting Srinagar to Kanniyakumari including Kochi-Salem Spur and East-West corridor comprising the National Highways connecting Silchar in Assam and Porbandar in Gujarat.

The project has a total length of about 7,300 km, out of which the North-South corridor is 4,000 km and East-West corridor is 3,300 km long. It is scheduled for completion by December, 2007.

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