Centre approves over one lakh crore rupees worth Highway and Shipping Projects for Tamil Nadu
Nitin Gadkari says under Prime Minister's initiative permanent solution for water starved Tamil Nadu on the anvil

Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Shipping, Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Shri Nitin Gadkari has said that the Centre has approved projects of value of more than one Lakh crore rupees for Tamil Nadu.

These projects will cover the Highways, Shipping and Port and for finding a permanent solution to the irrigation and drinking water requirements of the state.

The Minister was addressing a joint press conference with Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Shri Edappadi K. Palaniswami after a review meeting of Central and State government.

Shri Gadkari, announced 40,000 crore rupees worth of Road and Highway projects approved at the meeting today. He outlined the proposed projects with details of the financial outlay.

The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Eddapadi K. Palaniswamy said that the meeting was fruitful and thanked the Union Minister for largely accepting projects and programmes put forward by the state government.

Union Minister of State for Finance and Shipping, Shri P. Radhakrishnan and Tamil Nadu Transport Minister Shri. M.R.Vijayabhaskar, senior officials of Centre and State governments also attended the meeting.

Focussing on the decongestion of Chennai Traffic, Shri Gadkari said Three New Elevated Corridors have been approved first being the Tambaram-Chengelpatu at a cost of 2250 crores, Poonamalee- Maduravoyal Corridor with an outlay of 1500 crores and the Tiruvallur Corridor budgeted at 1000 crore. He also said that Tambaram- Vandalur ,Vandalur -Guduvanchery section of the Highway will be upgraded to 8 lane Highway with a budget of 72 crores which will also solve the traffic congestion at the Tambaram -Perungalathur bridge.

The Chennai- Bengaluru Expressway is being taken at a projected cost of 20,000 crore rupees and will boost industrialisation and development activities along the Express way. The Minister requested the state Government to earnestly take up land acquisition, shifting of utilities to help timely starting of the project.

The Minister said to ease the congestion in the extended suburban areas of Chennai, approval has been given for six laning of the Koyambedu-Poonamalee -Wallajahpet road at a cost of 1500 crores.

Listing the new projects to be awarded this year, Mr Gadkari said Tiruchi-Chidambaram Highway project is being taken up with a budgeted outlay of 4000 crore, while the Villupuram- Nagapattinam section is being upgraded at a cost of 6000 crore rupees. Other projects to be approved include Chennai- TADA (500 crore).

Elaborating on the Bhartmala project that links port terminals to the hinterland, he said six projects are being taken up the major one being Nagapattinam to Tuticorin (355 kms), Madurai- Kollam (62kms) Vellakoil-Erode (71kms), Madurai-Natham (38kms), Madurai -Theni(44kms) and Musiri - Namakkal (44kms). Along with these, the ring road development will be taken up in Madurai, Tiruchi and Salem.

Rs. 2000 crore has also been sanctioned to the State PWD to develop the Dindigul-Kottampati road into a National Highway. 1300 kms of State Highways are being upgraded to National Highways in the state. The state highways being upgraded include Perambalur- Attur (55kms), Salem-Vanniyampadi (141kms), Thoppur- Mettur-Erode (85kms),Tirupur-Ottanchatiram (91kms).

 In a bid to, reduce traffic accidents, the Centre is funding 2300 crore rupees to take preventive measures in 61 identified black spots where there are frequent accidents take place.

The Minister said the DPR for Madurai, Coimbatore and Salem bus ports – terminals with the latest facilities like an airport will be prepared and the report will be submitted soon.

On the Shipping front, the Minister said Tamil Nadu is only state with three major ports and said these would be enhanced to facilitate exports and industrialisation, and value addition under the Sagarmala programme.

Coal movement from Orissa through Paradip to Ennore and Tuticorin will significantly reduce the logistics cost of coal. He hoped to improve the coal handling productivity in all three ports. Coastal movement of petroleum products, LPG and automobiles is the lifeline of the industry of Tamil Nadu. Referring to Tuticorin port, shri Gadkari said the depth is to be increased from the present 14m to 16.5 meters at a cost of Rs.3000 crore rupees and this would help the port to handle 1,30,000 tonnage vessels from the present capacity of 60,000 tonnage ships. This would reduce the logistic cost by 30 percent.

He said coastal movement of containers from Chennai to Puducherry will commence soon and this would reduce the congestion on this road sector.

The Minister said a Passenger ferry services between Kanyakumari and Rameshwaram and between Kanyakumari and Thiruvananthapuram are being planned and urged private operators to come forward and participate in the project, stating that the centre would provide full support.

Coastal berths are being built at Cuddalore at a cost of Rs 115 crore and similar facilities are coming at Chennai and Tuticorin ports.

The Minister said that as the Prime Minister has assured a doubling of income of farmers by 2022, the present NDA government has taken up the interlinking of river projects and has given priority to the water scare southern states. The Minister said Water resources ministry has therefore decided on transfer of surplus Godavari river waters to the Cauvery via the Krishna and Pennar Rivers. He said a meeting of the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Telengana, Kerala and Tamil Nadu will be convened soon to discuss the project. Initially about 300tmc of water is proposed to be lifted from Godavari river upstream of Pollavaram project and would be released into the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam on River Krishna. Further the water would be taken from Krishna upto Somasilam project on river Pennar and from there to Grand Annaicut on the Cauvery.

***

KMK/SG