

L-G Vinai Kumar Saxena calls on Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari in New Delhi Highlights Road connectivity and infrastructure strengthening projects in Ladakh Union Minister assures full support to projects in Ladakh

Leh, April 21: The Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, today called on the Hon'ble Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), Shri Nitin Gadkari, in New Delhi to discuss key infrastructure projects aimed at strengthening road connectivity and boosting overall development in the Ladakh region.

During the meeting, the Lieutenant Governor apprised the Union Minister of several critical projects that require intervention and early sanction from the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

Shri Saxena discussed the progress of the Zoji-La Tunnel with the Hon'ble Minister, wherein Shri Nitin Gadkari informed that the final breakthrough of the tunnel is expected by the end of May. Once completed, the tunnel will connect Ladakh with the rest of the country, marking a significant milestone towards ensuring all-weather connectivity to the region.

The Lieutenant Governor also highlighted the need for avalanche protection works along the Zoji-La Top stretch. Despite the completion of the tunnel, Shri Saxena noted, this route will continue to be used for the movement of traffic, and hence, there was an urgent need for avalanche protection, as seven people lost their lives to an avalanche in the region in a recent incident.

The Lieutenant Governor raised the issue of pending projects under the Central Road and Infrastructure Fund (CRIF), informing that road and bridge works amounting to Rs 1465.88 crore are awaiting approval. He emphasised that these projects are critical for improving connectivity, enhancing safety, and driving economic growth, particularly in remote and strategically important areas of Ladakh.

Another key issue discussed was the upgradation of the NH-03 stretch from Leh to Sindhu Ghat. Shri Saxena informed that while 5.20 km out of the total 10.08 km has already been upgraded to a four-lane road, the remaining 4.88 km continues as a double-lane stretch, resulting in traffic congestion. He requested early approval for the upgradation of the remaining stretch to ensure smooth and efficient traffic flow.

The Lieutenant Governor also sought early sanction for the construction of the Leh Bypass. He informed that the DPR for the southern alignment of 48.10 km, estimated at Rs 1011 crore, has already been submitted, while the DPR for the northern alignment is under preparation. He noted that the project is expected to significantly ease congestion within Leh town and improve urban mobility.

Shri Nitin Gadkari, underscoring the strategic importance of Ladakh, instantly directed the concerned officials to prioritise all infrastructure projects in the region without delay and in a time-bound manner. He assured that sanctions for the pending CRIF projects would be accorded by the month of May, and instructed the concerned officials that all necessary approvals be expedited on priority.

Highlighting the broader impact of these initiatives, the Lieutenant Governor stated that the timely execution of these projects would significantly transform connectivity and infrastructure in Ladakh. He emphasised that the development of robust road infrastructure is essential for the region's growth, given its strategic location and challenging terrain, and added that these projects would not only ensure seamless connectivity but also boost tourism, facilitate economic activities, and generate employment opportunities for the local population.

