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## **Bottlenecks in highways construction will be removed - Mr Kamal Nath**

*Friday, 06 Nov, 2009*

Mr Kamal Nath minister for road transport & highways has announced that significant changes in the processes and procedures in the highways construction sector will be introduced in a month's time.

Mr Nath speaking at the Economic Editors' Conference, 2009 organized by the Press Information Bureau said that "Much of the bottlenecks will be removed in a month's time."

He said that with the suggestions of the Chaturvedi Committee appointed by the Prime Minister to resolve procedural impediments to the National Highways Development Program approved by the Cabinet Committee on Infrastructure, the first phase of irritants have been removed.

Elaborating on some of the recommendations that were approved, the minister said, changes have been made in the exit clause, termination and conflict of interest Clause so as to address the concerns of the stakeholders. On the conflict of interest clause, he said that now disqualification will not apply if the level of direct or indirect shareholding of competing bidders is not more than 25% of the paid up capital and subscribed share capital, instead of the current level of 5%. He further said that the Ministry has made a legal reference on the issue of associates and new bids with redefined conflict of interest clause will be put up for tendering in two week's time.

He also informed that to speed up the processes at NHAI, the government has also approved that further amendments to the RFQ/RFP could be done by the Ministry based on recommendations of NHAI Board.

The minister also announced that a Maintenance Manual would be put out so as to maintain the highways in good shape. On road safety issues, he said that a national conference with participation of state governments will be held shortly. Shri Nath also informed the participants at the Conference that the process time for land acquisitions have been reduced from 18 months to 8 months and 150 special land acquisition units are being set up. He also announced that 6 posts of Executive Directors would be created at Kolkata, Lucknow, Guwahati, Mumbai, Bangalore and Bhopal to liaise with State Governments and ensure speedy implementation of the projects.

The Minister said that Work plan for 2010-11, for award of another 11,721 km has been prepared. The same have been posted on the NHAI website in order to enable the stakeholders to plan ahead.

The Minister sounded positive and indicated that the business environment in the sector will improve in the coming days with the removal of the roadblocks that were hampering the investment in the highways sector

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