



Bharatmala Phase-1: Deadline Extended

For Prelims: [Bharatmala](#) , [Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs \(CCEA\)](#), **Public Investment Board**, [Capital Expenditure](#), [Goods and Services Tax](#)

For Mains: Bharatmala Pariyojana and Its contribution in India's infrastructure development.

Source: FE

Why in News?

Recently, the Government has extended the deadline for completion of the flagship highway development project [Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase-I](#) to **2027-28**.

- The move follows an over **100% increase** in the estimated cost of the mega project and reflects the **slowing of implementation**, and **financial constraints**.

What is Bharatmala Pariyojana?

- **About**

- [Bharatmala Pariyojana](#) is an **umbrella programme** launched under the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways**.
- The **first-phase of Bharatmala** was announced in **2017** and was to be completed by **2022**.

- **Sailent Features:**

- Bharatmala focuses on enhanced effectiveness of already built infrastructure, multi-modal integration, bridging infrastructure gaps for seamless movement and integrating National and Economic Corridors. There are **six key features of the programme**:
 - **Economic Corridors:** Integrating the economic corridors facilitates larger connectedness between economically important production and consumption centers.
 - **Inter-corridor and Feeder routes:** This would ensure first mile and last mile connectivity.
 - **National Corridor Efficiency Improvement:** Through this, the greater actionable goal is to undertake lane expansion and decongestion of existing National Corridors.
 - **Border and International Connectivity roads:** Better border road infrastructure would ensure greater maneuverability, while also boosting trade with neighboring countries.
 - **Coastal and Port connectivity roads:** Port-led economic development is further boosted through connectivity to coastal areas, encouraging both tourism and industrial development.
 - **Green-field Expressways:** Expressways have higher traffic configuration and choke points would benefit from green-field expressways.

- **Status:**

- Till November 2023, **15,045 km or 42%** of the project has been completed.

▪ **Challenges:**

- Cost of raw material, Increased land acquisition cost, Construction of high speed corridors and increase in Goods and Services Tax rates.

Way Forward

- Examine strategic procurement methods to acquire **raw materials at competitive prices**. Participate in negotiations with suppliers to ensure favorable rates, particularly during market fluctuations.
- Implement efficient and transparent land acquisition practices to minimize compensation disputes. Explore alternatives such as **land pooling and community engagement to streamline the process**.
- Conduct thorough feasibility studies before incorporating high-speed corridors. Optimize corridor designs to balance functionality with cost-effectiveness.
- Advocate for **stable and predictable GST policies to minimize uncertainties**. Engage with government authorities to provide industry insights on the impact of tax rate changes.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q1. With reference to 'National Investment and Infrastructure Fund', which of the following statements is/are correct? **(2017)**

1. It is an organ of NITI Aayog.
2. It has a corpus of `4,00,000 crore at present.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a)** 1 only
- (b)** 2 only
- (c)** Both 1 and 2
- (d)** Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (d)

- The NIIF (National Investment and Infrastructure Fund) is overseen by the Investment Division of the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.
- The NIIF is currently managing three funds which are registered as Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs) under the SEBI Regulations. Those three funds are Master Fund, Strategic Fund and Fund of Funds and the proposed corpus of NIIF is `40,000 crore and not 4,00,000 crore. Hence, statement 2 is not correct. Therefore, option (d) is the correct answer.

Mains

Q. "Investment in infrastructure is essential for more rapid and inclusive economic growth." Discuss in the light of India's experience. **(2021)**