

AIR Spotlight - Big Push for Infrastructure Development in the Country

AIR Spotlight is an insightful program featured daily on the All India Radio Newsonair. In this program, many eminent panellists discuss issues of importance which can be quite helpful in [IAS exam](#) preparation. In this article, the topic of discussion is the various initiatives for infrastructure development being done in India.

Participants:

- A K Bhattacharya, Economic Analyst.
- Deepak Kumar Das, Journalist.

Context:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone through a video conference for two road projects aimed at improving connectivity to the temple town of Pandharpur in Maharashtra.

Background:

- Prime Minister Modi wants to speed up investments in infrastructure areas and he also wants to utilize the investments already made in these infrastructure areas and wants to monetize them so that the money received can be used further as a part of the virtuous cycle of increased investment.
- The [Covid-19](#) pandemic has devastated the Indian economy. The idea behind launching this initiative is to sustain investments because those investments will help sustain growth through demand creation.

The initiative:

- In a step towards boosting connectivity to the pilgrimage town of Pandharpur in Maharashtra, the Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for four-laning of five sections of Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj Palkhi Marg (NH-965) and three sections of Shri Sant Tukaram Maharaj Palkhi Marg (NH-965G) through video conferencing.
- Kicking off the projects, PM Modi said the annual Pandharpur pilgrimage in Maharashtra is a symbol of social harmony, equal opportunity, and power of women who take part in the event along with male devotees.
 - “Women and men walk side by side during the pilgrimage to the temple town Pandharpur in Solapur District.”
- Dedicated walkways for ‘Palkhi’ will be developed on either side of the above-mentioned National Highways to provide hassle-free and safe passage to devotees.
- The Prime Minister appealed to the locals to plant trees on both sides of the highways and establish drinking water facilities at regular stops so that the warkaris (devotees undertaking the pilgrimage or wari) could avail shade and quench their thirst. Through this, he also wanted to highlight the need for sustainable growth along with “Sab ka sath, sab ka Vikas”.

- The economic policies of PM Modi are focused on connecting the people with the outcomes of these policies. The government is trying to introduce infrastructure projects in a manner that people get benefits from them directly or indirectly.

Meeting the deadline:

- As a country, India has suffered a lot from delayed projects.
- Some policy initiatives have also been taken to ensure that the deadlines are met. For example:
- **The Gatishakti project:**
 - The idea behind the 'Gati Shakti' scheme is that the government is aiming to create a digital platform promising the "integrated planning and coordinated execution" by sixteen ministries.
 - It will bring together under one ambit the government departments like railways, roads and highways and many more.
 - This will help in resolving the issue of not meeting the deadlines because of ineffective coordination.
 - **Know more about the [Gati Shakti Project](#) in the linked article.**
- QCBS:
 - Recently the government has changed the plan of procuring items for various projects.
 - Projects get delayed not only because of contractors who fail to meet deadlines but also because of the discretionary methods of procurement.
 - The government has now shifted to **Quality Based Selection Process Criteria** that will help in the better execution of complex infrastructure projects.

Way Forward:

- The government is much more focused on increasing the capital expenditure projects so that the infrastructure momentum is maintained.
- The government is conscious of the need for completing the projects on time and also taking steps by which the deadlines are adhered to.

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