

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI MANSUKH L. MANDAVIYA): (a) and (b) Length of National Highways (NHs) in the country as on date is 1,03,613 km. As per latest data, total number of persons killed in road accidents on NHs including expressway during calendar year 2015 is reported to be 51,204. Though NH-wise information relating to road accidents, persons killed and injured is not available, total number of accidents, persons killed and injured during calendar year 2014 & 2015 are as below:

Year	Total no. of road accidents on NHs	Total no. of persons killed in road accidents on NHs	Total no. of persons injured in road accidents on NHs.
2014	1,37,903	47,649	1,47,696
2015	1,42,268	51,204	1,45,341

For calendar year 2016 data is not available.

(c) Road safety Audits are carried out at different stages like feasibility stage, design stage, construction stage and pre-opening stage to identify safety concerns and implement its recommendations for rectification of the concerns.

(d) and (e) Lighting is provided as part of scope of work on NHs passing through urban areas as per the site requirement. Generally, there is no provision of lighting on NHs passing through rural areas.

Survival of trees planted along roads and highways

589. SHRI SAMBHAJI CHHATRAPATI: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that 90 per cent of tree saplings planted along the roads and highways do not survive due to lack of proper care and maintenance mechanism; and

(b) if so, what mechanism Government is likely to introduce for their care and maintenance to increase their survival rate?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI MANSUKH L. MANDAVIYA): (a) and (b) Except for rare incidences of unprecedented climatic extremities like severe drought or flash floods, such high casualties are generally not encountered in roadside plantations. However, casualties

in plantations during the initial years are common; and provisions for replacement of casualties by way of repeated re-planting are part of all plantation programmes. Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has also launched the Green Highways (Plantation, Transplantation, Beautification, & Maintenance) Policy, 2015 to promote greening of Highway corridors with participation of the community, farmers, private sector, NGOs, and government institutions. This will also strengthen the monitoring of plantations on National Highways.

Exemption from toll to defence personnel

590. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry has withdrawn the letter (OM No.H-24030/32/2014-(Toll) dated 17th I June, 2014) that withdrew exemption from toll tax available to 'on duty' and 'off duty' serving personnel of the defence services;

(b) whether the Ministry is aware that this exemption falls under the provisions of the Indian Tolls (Army and Air Force) Act, 1901 and various notifications and letters/OMs issued on the subject from time to time and also the decisions of Constitutional Courts;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI MANSUKH L. MANDAVIYA): (a) to (d) No Sir, the Ministry has not withdrawn its letter i.e. OM No. H-24030/32/2014-(Toll) dated 17th June 2014. However, it is clarified that under Rule 11(b)(i) of the National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008, no fee shall be levied and collected from a mechanical vehicle used for official purpose by the Ministry of Defence including those which are eligible for exemption in accordance with the provisions of the Indian Toll (Army and Air Force) Act, 1901 and rules made thereunder, as extended to Navy also.

Land acquisition for National Highways

591. SHRI RITABRATA BANERJEE: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that acquisition of land is a big hindrance for expansion of National Highways in the country;