

2. In addition, 48,877 kms. of projects under other ongoing schemes like NH(O), Special Accelerated Road Development Programme in North-East (SARDP-NE), Externally Aided Projects (EAPs) and Roads Projects in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) Affected Areas are also to be implemented during the same period. This has an approved outlay of ₹ 1,57,324 crore. Therefore, including Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase-I, 83,677 kms. of highway sector projects are proposed to be implemented with an overall cost of ₹ 6,92,324 crore.

Shortage of truck drivers

249. SHRI DEVENDER GOUD T.: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it has come to the notice of the Ministry that lakhs of trucks in the country are not plying on roads due to shortage of drivers;
- (b) whether it is a fact that the country has a shortage of 22 lakh drivers;
- (c) if so, how the Ministry is planning to train drivers with the help of States; and
- (d) the reasons for not making driving, an important skill development initiative?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI MANSUKH L. MANDAVIYA): (a) and (b) Shortage of truck drivers is an issue which has been highlighted by various transporters. Ministry has not carried any study to assess the exact figures of shortage of drivers.

(c) and (d) Ministry of Road Transport and Highways administers a scheme under which financial assistance are provided for setting up of Institute of Driving Training and Research (IDTR), Regional Driving Training Centre (RDTC) and Small Driving Training Centre School. Besides, the Ministry has also provided funds to State Road Transport Undertakings (SRTUs) to augment the training infrastructure in their training centres. Amendments have also been incorporated in the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2017 to facilitate setting up of accredited driving training schools for grant of transport licences. The Bill has been passed by Lok Sabha.

Distance-based toll charge

250. DR. PRADEEP KUMAR BALMUCHU: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is planning to introduce the distance-based toll charge system in place of open toll charge policy;