

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-1676
ANSWERED ON- 21/12/2022

MAINTENANCE OF OLD PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE SUCH AS BRIDGES

1676. DR. L. HANUMANTHAIAH:
DR. AMEE YAJNIK:
SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL:
SMT. RANJEET RANJAN:

Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) reasons for not taking stringent steps to ensure maintenance of old public infrastructure despite 25 per cent mortality rate of bridges in India;
- (b) whether Government intends to introduce safeguards to prevent untrained and unskilled bidders from getting public sector contracts, if so, details thereof and if not, reasons therefor;
- (c) whether Government intends to have framework/policy to assess age of individual bridges in States/country, details thereof and if not, reasons therefor; and
- (d) whether Government intends to implement a monitoring mechanism to ensure structural integrity of public infrastructure, especially old bridges, if so, details thereof and if not, reasons therefor?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

(SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI)

(a) Maintenance and development of National Highways (NHs) including bridges thereon is a continuous process. Accordingly, repair / rehabilitation / reconstruction of existing NHs including old/ distressed bridges thereon are taken up on annual basis. Repair / rehabilitation / reconstruction of old / distressed bridges are taken up either on standalone basis or as part of improvement/ upgradation of a section of National Highway. The repair / rehabilitation treatment are decided based on nature and extent of different distresses, functional requirement, present loading vis-à-vis loading for which a particular bridge was designed, etc.

(b) The bidding documents for procurement of contractor/concessionaire for NH projects under different modes of implementation (EPC/HAM/BOT) clearly specify the technical and financial qualification requirements of the bidders. Such qualification requirements are decided based on cost and size of NH projects including specific project components like bridges / tunnels. Further, to ensure construction of roads as per standards and specifications laid down in contract/concession agreement and to avoid project delays, Ministry vide circular dated 06.10.2021 and dated 04.01.2022 has issued SOP to debar/penalize/declare as Non-Performer the contractor/concessionaire in NHs and other centrally sponsored road projects.

(c) & (d) Year of construction/ approximate age of a bridge is generally known except some old bridges. Ministry follow a well-established system of inspection/maintenance protocol for periodical assessment of physical condition of bridges. Indian Roads Congress (IRC) has published manual / detailed guidelines for inspection and condition survey of bridges. MoRT&H has also issued guidelines for this purpose. MoRT&H has collected inventory and condition data of all bridges on National Highways between 2015 to 2019. Bridge inspection was principally carried out using Mobile Bridge Inspection unit for close access to different critical components of the bridges. Recently, MoRT&H has engaged a consultant for development of Bridge Management System (BMS) for NHs by May, 2024. The BMS will provide an online platform for monitoring health of all bridges on NHs in the country.
