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InfraCon Weekly Review

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POLICY & REGULATORY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Railways Introduces Single Licence for Container Train Operators

Indian Railways has approved modifications in the Model Concession Agreement (MCA) governing permission for operators to run container trains on the Indian Railways network. Under the approved changes, Container Train Operators (CTOs) will be permitted to run container trains on all routes across the network under a single All India license, with a uniform registration fee of Rs 25 crore, doing away with the earlier system of separate permissions and fees for different route categories. The changes will be notified through a Gazette Notification.

The approved amendments provide that the permission granted to a Container Train Operator may be extended for a further period of 20 years after expiry. This will be done by the Competent Authority to the same operator on application, subject to satisfactory performance. No extension fee will be charged for this extension or for any future extensions to the same operator.

Operators already holding Category I licenses may continue under their existing category until their concession period ends. On renewal or extension under the new license, no fee will be charged to them. Operators in Category II, III and IV may also continue in their existing categories until their concession period ends. For renewal or extension under the new license, they will pay ₹15 crore. This is the difference between the new fee of ₹25 crore and the ₹10 crore already paid. This amount is non-refundable. These operators may also choose to migrate early to the new license before completing their 20 year concession period. They will pay the same amount of ₹15 crore for early migration.

The uniform registration fee and removal of extension fees are expected to reduce regulatory and compliance costs for operators while simplifying the approval process. The simplified licensing is expected to encourage greater private participation and expansion of container train operations, leading to improved rail-based freight movement across the country. Greater use of rail for container transportation is expected to reduce logistics costs for industry, particularly MSMEs, by providing a more efficient and cost-effective freight transport option.

Increased modal shift of container traffic from road to rail is also expected to ease congestion on highways, reduce fuel consumption and lower carbon emissions, contributing to more sustainable freight transportation. The approved amendments are aimed at establishing a simplified and uniform licensing framework for Container Train Operators across the Indian Railways network. The reforms are expected to facilitate a streamlined approval mechanism while providing a common regulatory framework for container train operations under the Model Concession Agreement.

Cabinet Approved Revised Policy for Award of Waterfront and Associated Land to Port Dependent Industries (PDI) in Major Ports

The Union Cabinet has approved a revised Policy for Award of Waterfront and Associated Land to Port Dependent Industries (Captive Policy), introducing a series of reforms aimed at accelerating private investment through the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model, improving operational flexibility and strengthening infrastructure development across India's major ports.

The revised policy updates the existing Captive Policy of 2016 by enabling existing captive users to expand capacity through new berths, jetties, terminals and single buoy moorings (SBMs), while also providing a framework for extending concession agreements, awarding waterfront to eligible government entities and addressing changes arising from evolving business and regulatory conditions.

The policy is expected to provide greater certainty to investors, facilitate capacity augmentation and improve ease of doing business in the port sector without any financial implication for the Government.

Cabinet Clears Unified National Compressed Biogas Scheme 'GOBARdhan' with Rs 23,731 Cr Outlay

The Union Cabinet approved GOBARdhan, India's National Unified Scheme for Compressed Biogas, on 6th August with an outlay of Rs 23,731 crore. The initiative consolidates various biogas and compressed biogas programmes under a single umbrella to streamline implementation and accelerate the country's waste-to-wealth transition.

GOBARdhan, which stands for Galvanising Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan, aims to convert biodegradable waste including cattle dung, agricultural residues and municipal solid waste into compressed biogas and organic manure. The scheme, which will be implemented between FY27 and FY36, creates a unified national framework for the CBG sector and will be administered by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. The scheme addresses multiple national priorities simultaneously: reducing dependence on imported fossil fuels, managing agricultural waste, providing additional income to farmers, and supporting India's climate commitments.

Cabinet approves 'Samudra Manthan' - National Offshore Exploration Scheme with ₹84,084 Cr Outlay

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, approved "Samudra Manthan" the National Offshore Exploration Scheme, a Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas carrying an approved outlay of ₹84,084 crore for implementation through FY 2030–31. It is India's most ambitious offshore exploration mission to date.

This approval marks the culmination of a series of transformative reforms undertaken under the leadership of the Hon'ble Prime Minister to strengthen India's hydrocarbon exploration and production sector. The National Offshore Exploration Scheme, Samudra Manthan, builds upon these reforms by translating policy into action and opening a new chapter in India's journey towards energy security and Atmanirbhar Bharat.

India is the world's third-largest consumer of crude oil, with an annual import bill of nearly USD 144 billion (approximately ₹13 lakh crore). As recent geopolitical developments have demonstrated, secure and uninterrupted access to energy resources is of strategic importance for a rapidly growing economy. With India's energy demand expected to rise steadily in the coming decades, enhancing domestic oil and gas production is essential for reducing import dependence, strengthening energy resilience, and securing the nation's long-term economic growth.

Cabinet Clears Rs 5,070 Crore Surya Sarovar Yojana to Add 5,000 MW Floating Solar Capacity with Energy Storage Systems

The Union Cabinet approved the Pradhan Mantri Surya Sarovar Yojana on Friday (31 July), allocating Rs 5,070 crore to develop 5,000 MW of floating solar photovoltaic projects with co-located energy storage systems. The scheme, running from FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31, offers central financial assistance of Rs 1 crore per MW post-commissioning and up to Rs 50 lakh for feasibility studies.

India currently has around 700 MW of floating solar capacity, and the initiative aims to enhance this by sevenfold. The projects will be installed on reservoirs and industrial ponds, utilising water bodies without requiring additional land. Each installation will include energy storage systems with a minimum capacity of two hours, equivalent to 10,000 MWh, improving grid reliability and managing intermittent solar power.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES/PROGRAMMES

Government Plans Rs 45,000 Crore Railway Upgrade across China, Pakistan and Bangladesh Borders

India is preparing a major expansion of its railway infrastructure along its international frontiers, with plans to invest up to Rs 45,000 crore over the next two years to improve connectivity across border-states adjoining China, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The programme, expected to be implemented over the next 18 to 24 months, will focus on constructing new railway lines, expanding track capacity, building platforms and upgrading existing infrastructure across Punjab, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam and several north-eastern states.

According to reports, the border-focused initiative would account for nearly 22 per cent of India's planned railway infrastructure expenditure during the period. While relations with China have stabilised following years of military tensions, India continues to prioritise infrastructure development along its northern frontier. At the same time, security concerns along the Pakistan border and changing political circumstances in neighbouring Bangladesh have reinforced the need for resilient transport networks.

NEW PROJECTS

Cabinet approves construction of 135.87 km 4 Lane Highway along NH-15 in Assam at Rs. 8970 Cr

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the development of 135.871 km, 4-lane access-controlled Guwahati-Tezpur Corridor of NH-15 in Assam. The project will be developed on Built-Operate - Transfer (BOT) Toll Mode at a total capital cost of Rs.8970.20 crore under NH (O).

The project envisages construction of an Emergency Landing Facility (ELF) (4.9 Km.) in Tezpur Bypass which have been finalized in coordination with IAF and would decongest existing NH-27 (East west Corridor) on the south side of Brahmaputra river. The project includes construction of 05 major bypasses of length 58.7 Km., thereby easing congestion on stretches passing through densely populated areas such as Baihata Chariali, Sipajhar, Kharupetia, Dekiajuli, Tezpur.

In addition, the project has provision for 15 Major Bridge, 30 Minor Bridge, 19 flyovers, 01 Elephant Under Pass (in Tezpur bypass). 46 Underpasses and 19 Flyovers with 210 Km. of service road will also be constructed as part of the project to maintain cross movement of the traffic as the project is proposed to be developed as access controlled.

The project will provide seamless connectivity to key economic, social, and logistics nodes across Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Additionally, the upgraded corridor will enhance connectivity to 08 PM Gati-Shakti Economic Nodes (08 Industrial Parks), 02 Social Nodes (02 Aspirational districts of Darrang and Udalguri), 03 Tourist Notes (Maa Kamakhaya Temple, Kaziranga National Park, Orang National Park) and 07 Logistic Nodes (03 Major Railway Stations, 02 Airports,02 Waterway Terminal), thereby facilitating faster movement of goods and passengers across the region.

Indian Railways Approves ₹976 Cr Danapur-Fatuha Multitracking Project in Bihar of ECR

Indian Railways has approved multitracking of the 29 km Danapur to Fatuha section of East Central Railway at a cost of ₹976 crore. The project will decongest one of the busiest stretches on the Patna rail corridor and create room for a large increase in both passenger and freight services.

The sanctioned work covers three components. Third and fourth lines will be laid between Danapur and Patna. A third line will be laid between Rajendra Nagar and Patna Saheb. Third and fourth lines will be laid between Patna Saheb and Fatuha. The additional lines will ease congestion, minimise delays, and improve punctuality across the Patna region.

In the first year of operation, the project will allow 22 additional passenger trains and 18 additional freight trains every day. It will also enable handling of an additional 5.2 million tonnes per annum of freight traffic.

The project forms part of the quadrupling initiative on the Delhi, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Junction, Patna, Kiul, Bhagalpur, Khanna and Howrah route. This route is identified under the Energy, Mineral and Cement Corridor of Indian Railways. The strengthened section is also vital for the upcoming 2120 MW thermal power plant at Chausa in Buxar district, which will depend on rail movement of bulk inputs.

Uttar Pradesh Approves Rs 8,585 Cr Expressway Linking Jewar Airport to Ganga Expressway Via Bulandshahr

The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet has approved the construction of a six-lane, access-controlled greenfield expressway connecting Jewar Airport to the Ganga Expressway via Bulandshahr. The proposal was cleared in a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday (4 August) at his official residence in Lucknow. The proposed expressway will be 74.467 km long, with the project estimated to cost Rs 8,585.51 crore.

The six-lane expressway has been designed for future expansion to eight lanes and has been planned to handle traffic demand for the next 30 years. The stretch will start from Bhaipur Brahman in Noida and will end near Bahapur village in Bulandshahr, where it will merge with the Ganga Expressway. No participation from the Central government is expected or proposed for the project. The construction of the expressway will be divided into parts, with the first section running from Bhaipur Brahman in Noida to Bichaula village in Bulandshahr, and the second section from Bichaula to Bahapur.

CONTRACT AWARDS

Afcons receives LoA for ₹1,918-cr desalinated water tunnel project in Mumbai

Mumbai-based Afcons Infrastructure has secured a Letter of Acceptance (LoA) from the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) for a ₹1,918-crore desalinated water conveyance tunnel project, marking another major addition to its urban water infrastructure portfolio. The project involves the design and construction of a tunnel to transport desalinated water from the proposed pumping station at Manori to Charkop, extending further to Mahavir Nagar in Kandivali.

The contract, valued at ₹1,918 crore, includes Goods and Services Tax (GST) as well as operations and maintenance (O&M). The project forms a key part of Mumbai's long-term strategy to diversify its water supply. Unlike the city's existing water system, which depends largely on reservoirs filled by the monsoon, desalination converts seawater into drinking water. Once the desalination plant becomes operational, the tunnel will transport treated water to different parts of the city.

Tata Projects bags Rs 670 cr order from RMZ for Chennai commercial project

Tata Projects has secured an order worth Rs 670.24 crore from real estate platform RMZ for the main civil works of a commercial development in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. Under the contract, the company will undertake complete core and shell construction including civil, structural and architectural works, masonry, plastering, waterproofing, common-area finishes, basement flooring, fire-rated doors, external finishes and painting.
The project is the latest addition to RMZ's Chennai portfolio. Tata Projects is one of the country's leading technology-led engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) companies.

KEC International bags new orders worth Rs 1,063 crore

KEC International has secured new orders worth Rs 1,063 crore across its Civil, Transmission & Distribution (T&D), Renewables, and Cables & Conductors businesses. The Civil business secured a major order for a high-rise residential project from a leading real estate developer. The contract involves the construction of residential buildings with a total built-up area of 24 lakh sq. ft., along with associated facilities.

The T&D business bagged orders for a 400 kV transmission line project in Africa and for the supply of towers, hardware and poles in the Americas. The Renewables business received an order for a 50+ MW wind EPC project from an existing private developer in western India.

Dilip Buildcon secures 160 INR-Crore EPC road project in Odisha

Dilip Buildcon Limited (DBL) has received a Letter of Award (LoA) from the Odisha Bridge & Construction Corporation (OB&CC) for an EPC road project in Odisha. The contract is valued at 160.20 INR-Crore, excluding GST. The Odisha EPC road project is located in Sundargarh district. According to the company, the project will be completed within 18 months.

The scope includes the construction of a six-lane diversion road along with service roads on the Duduka–Gopalpur–Toparia Road. The project covers the stretch from 4.700 Km to 11.500 Km. Dilip Buildcon will execute the project under the Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) model. The company also stated that the contract has been awarded by a domestic entity and does not qualify as a related-party transaction.

FUNDING

ADB Approves $1 Billion Loan to Support Sustainable Growth and Resilience of India's Cities

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a $1 billion loan to support the Government of India's urban reform agenda and maintain momentum in urban investments and reforms aimed at transforming cities into engines of economic growth, innovation, and livability.

The Urban Transformation and Investment Program supports the implementation of India's flagship Urban Challenge Fund (UCF) and related reforms to strengthen urban institutions, improve integrated economic and spatial planning, and help urban local bodies strengthen their finances. It will promote resilient urban regeneration that protects women and girls, including transit-oriented development and improved public-space management. It will also expand access to commercial capital, including through municipal bonds and other market-based financing, while modernizing urban governance through digital systems that improve transparency, efficiency, and evidence-based decision-making.

ADB has been a long-standing partner of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA). Since 2024, ADB has contributed to analytical work on cities as growth hubs, creative redevelopment of cities, and water supply and sanitation in Indian cities, which helped lay the groundwork for the UCF. ADB's support also includes $3 million in technical assistance to help MoHUA implement the UCF.

COMPANY/PROJECT UPDATES

DMRC floats ₹1,373.36 Cr Civil Works Tender on Rithala-Kundli Corridor of Delhi Metro

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has invited bids for a ₹1,373.36 crore civil contract for the Rithala-Kundli corridor under Delhi Metro Phase IV. The contract covers the construction of viaducts, depot connectivity and 11 metro stations, making it one of the major civil packages for the upcoming corridor.

The contract covers the design and construction of elevated viaduct, At-grade viaduct, sidings, elevated ramps, Entry/Exit line to Depot, and Ten elevated station and one At grade station viz Narela Sector G-8, Narela Sector G-7, Narela Sector G-6, Narela Depot Station (At grade), Narela Anaj Mandi, Narela Sector A7, Narela Sector A-1, Narela Sector A-4, Narela Sector A-5, Kundli, Nathupur including Civil works excluding Architectural finishes and PEB works (PreEngineered Building works) from Chainage – 11299.093m to 26704.685m of Rithala-Kundli Corridor of MRTS Phase-IV.

The Rithala, Narela, Nathupur (Kundli) Metro Corridor is one of the main routes under Delhi Metro Phase IV. The Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the 26.463 km elevated corridor to improve metro connectivity between Delhi and nearby Haryana. The project is estimated to cost ₹6,230 crore, and the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) will carry it out through the existing 50:50 Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) of the Government of India and the Government of NCT of Delhi.

The line will extend the Delhi Metro Red Line from Rithala to Kundli and Nathupur, covering 21 stations. Once it is operational, it will enhance connectivity for North Delhi and the rapidly growing areas of Narela, Kundli, and Nathupur, making travel between Delhi and Haryana quicker and more convenient.

Western Railway floats ₹18,901.68 cr EPC tender for Sarkhej-Dholera Semi High-Speed Double Rail Line

Western Railway has invited bids for building the Sarkhej-Dholera Semi High-Speed Double Rail Line. This marks a significant step in developing India’s first semi high-speed railway corridor. The EPC contract is valued at approximately ₹18,901.68 crore and includes civil works, track, electrification, signaling, telecommunications, testing, and commissioning. The project will connect Ahmedabad (Sarkhej) with Dholera, while also providing spur lines to the Lothal National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) and the upcoming Dholera Airport.

The selected contractor will Construct the Sarkhej-Dholera Semi High-Speed Double Railway Line, including Spur lines to Lothal NMHC and Dholera Airport Terminal; comprising civil works, which includes Formation & Viaduct, Bridges, Station buildings, & associated works; Track System (Ballasted & BLT), Overhead Traction System including Electrical General Services; Signalling & Telecommunication System, Operating Control Centre, integration of all systems Complete in all respect including Testing & Commissioning and all appurtenant works under jurisdiction of Western Railway.

The Ahmedabad (Sarkhej) -Dholera Semi High-Speed Double Line is a flagship project of the Ministry of Railways with an estimated overall cost of around ₹20,667 crore. It is planned as Indian Railways’ first semi high-speed rail project using indigenously developed technology.

The corridor will provide faster rail connectivity between Ahmedabad, Dholera Special Investment Region (SIR), the upcoming Dholera International Airport, and the Lothal National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC).

The improved connectivity will significantly reduce travel time, making daily commuting and same-day return trips more convenient. The project has been planned under the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan to strengthen multimodal connectivity and improve logistics efficiency through integrated infrastructure planning. Once completed, the corridor will support regional economic growth, improve passenger mobility and enhance connectivity across Gujarat.

Jupiter Wagons, Italy's Lucchini RS partner to build railwheel manufacturing platform in India

Jupiter Wagons Ltd has entered into a strategic partnership with Italy's Lucchini RS Holding SpA to develop an integrated railwheel manufacturing platform. Under the agreement, Lucchini RS will acquire a 15 per cent stake in Jupiter Tatravagonka Railwheel Factory Pvt Ltd (JTRWF), while Italian government-backed financial institution SIMEST SpA will acquire another 10 per cent stake. The combined 25 per cent stake is valued at about 28 million euros (about ₹307 crore).

The partnership aims to manufacture railway wheels, axles and wheelsets across the entire value chain, from raw material processing to finished products. JTRWF's existing facility at Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar will be integrated with a greenfield manufacturing complex being developed in Odisha, which will house forging, metallurgy and wheel manufacturing facilities.

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