

## CHAPTER-I: INTRODUCTION

### 1. Indo-Nepal Border Road Project (INBRP)

Securing the country's borders against interests hostile to the country and putting in place systems that are able to interdict such elements while facilitating legitimate trade and commerce are among the principal objectives of border management. As part of the strategy to secure the borders as also to create infrastructure in the border areas of the country, several initiatives have been undertaken by the Government of India, through the Department of Border Management under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). These include construction of roads, fences, floodlighting, Border Out Posts (BOPs), Company Operating Bases (COBs) and deployment of technological solutions along the international borders, including the Indo-Nepal border.

India and Nepal share an open border of 1751 kilometer (km) which runs along the five States of Bihar, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal. The Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship, 1950 provides for an open border allowing free movement of Indian and Nepalese citizens without any travel document. Due to its open and porous nature, the Indo-Nepal Border is vulnerable to anti-national and anti-social activities.

*Sashastra Seema Bal* (SSB) is designated as the border guarding force on the Indo-Nepal border. As per the approved project (2010) for development of roads along the Indo-Nepal border, the SSB operated from 389 BOPs in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, of which only 160 BOPs were connected by roads, severely limiting the mobility of troops and their ability to launch fast operations against anti-national and criminal elements.

In this context, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) approved (November 2010) the proposal of the MHA for construction/upgradation of 1377 km of strategic border roads along Indo-Nepal border (INB) in the States of Bihar (564 km), Uttar Pradesh (640 km) and Uttarakhand (173 km) at an estimated cost of ₹ 3853 crore with a timeframe of five years from 2011-12 i.e. by March 2016. However, the project could not be completed by March 2016 due to delays in acquisition of land and obtaining of environment, forest and wildlife clearances in the three States. Therefore, extension of time was given by the CCS (February 2018) (i) up to 31 December 2019 for completion of ongoing work free from encumbrance and (ii) up to 31 December 2022 for completion of balance work. The High Level Empowered Committee (HLEC<sup>1</sup>) further extended (December 2019/January 2021) the timeline up to 31 December 2022 for construction of roads on stretches free from encumbrances. The main objectives of the Indo-Nepal Border Road Project (INBRP) were as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> HLEC is a fast track mechanism in MHA for approval/clearance of works related to border management and has powers to administrative and financial decision on all security issues. HLEC is headed by the Home Secretary with the Secretary (Border Management), Secretary (Defence), Foreign Secretary, Secretary (Department of Expenditure) and DG (Works), CPWD among others as members.

- The proposed roads will primarily run parallel to the border, thereby adding to the mobility of the border guarding forces and enable them to dominate the sensitive border more effectively.
- These roads shall also meet the requirements of the border population and catalyse better implementation of development initiatives in border areas.

## 1.1 Roles and responsibilities of various authorities

The roles and responsibilities of various authorities under INBRP were as follows:

**Table No. 1: Roles and responsibilities of various authorities under INBRP**

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Central Government/MHA</b>      | HLEC would accord administrative approval and financial sanction for the works on the recommendations of Technical Committee (TC) <sup>2</sup> .<br>MHA would release funds to State Executing Agencies through the respective State Governments.<br>MHA would enter into Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the State Governments for implementation of the scheme.  |
| <b>State Government/State PWDs</b> | The State Government would finalise the alignment of the roads in consultation with the border guarding forces (SSB) and MHA.<br>The State Government would acquire the land, obtain the necessary clearances, including forest/wildlife clearances and bear the cost thereof.<br>The State Executing Agencies <sup>3</sup> would prepare Detailed Project Reports (DPRs)/cost estimates in respect of road works assigned to them in phased manner.<br>The State Executing Agencies would execute the construction of roads and for their maintenance. |

## 1.2 Audit objectives

The objectives of the performance audit were to ascertain whether:

- Planning was adequate for ensuring fulfillment of the project's objectives;
- Funds were released and utilised efficiently for executing the works;
- Construction activities were carried out efficiently to ensure the completion of the project within the stipulated time; and
- Effective mechanism for monitoring and quality assurance of the project existed.

<sup>2</sup> TC headed by DG (Works), CPWD examined estimates framed by executing agencies and placed its recommendations for approval before HLEC.

<sup>3</sup> Public Works Department in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand; and Road Construction Department in Bihar.

### 1.3 Scope of audit

The performance audit covered the period from 2010-11 to 2018-19. The status of the physical and financial progress of the project has been updated up to March 2021<sup>4</sup>. The audit involved scrutiny of records and other evidence in MHA, SSB and executing agencies in the three States, viz. Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

### 1.4 Audit methodology

An entry conference was held with MHA on 19 November 2019 wherein the audit objectives, scope and methodology were explained. The records relating to implementation of the scheme at the central level in MHA and at State level in the three States were examined. The draft audit report was issued to the MHA on 29 October 2020. Exit conference with the MHA was held on 4 February 2021, wherein major audit findings were discussed. Replies received from the MHA (upto 31 December 2021) and State Executing Agencies from time to time and deliberations during the Exit Conference have been considered and suitably incorporated.

### 1.5 Audit criteria

The criteria adopted to arrive at the audit conclusion are:

- Note for the Cabinet Committee on Security: 2010 & 2018;
- MoU between MHA & State Governments;
- Specification for road and bridgeworks of MHA prescribed by Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) and Indian Road Congress (IRC); and
- PWD Codes and Public Works Accounts (PWA) Codes etc. of the stakeholder States.

### 1.6 Acknowledgement

Audit acknowledges the co-operation and assistance extended by the Ministry of Home Affairs, State Public Works/Road Construction Departments (executing agencies) and their officials during conduct of this audit.

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<sup>4</sup> Wherever necessary as per the information furnished by the MHA.