

# Govt may look at building concrete roads for express highways: Nath

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New Delhi, Jan 14: Road transport and highways minister Kamal Nath on Thursday said the government is likely to consider use of cement to build certain sections of expressways in the country. The government has planned creating expressways of 18,637 km at a cost of over \$100 billion.

"It is viable to build greenfield roads with concrete. So use of cement is appropriate in expressways as they are greenfield. However, it may depend on the location and the projected traffic," Nath told reporters on the sidelines of National Seminar on Concrete Highway Projects, organised by Confederation of Indian Industry. Nath will meet all state transport ministers next month and is likely to discuss use of cement in road projects.

Road Transport and Highways secretary Brahm Dutt, meanwhile, blamed cement manufacturers for not keeping price commitment while supplying cement for Golden Quadrilateral Projects. "Cement industry must look inward before starting a long-term relationship with road sector. It should not be a case where cement industry now wants to supply cement to road sector as demand in construction sector is down," Dutt said.

The secretary also blamed cement industry of not supplying required quality of cement in some road projects. "In the last 2-3 years, the cement industry did not maintain its commitment on price and quality of cement and this was



**Heading for a smooth journey:** Transport minister Kamal Nath at a seminar on Concrete Highway Projects, in New Delhi on Thursday. Nath said concrete can also be used on roads, where wear and tear is high. Cement will not be used for upgrading the existing bitumen roads PH

a deterrent to the development of concrete projects and many such projects could not take off," he said citing an example from a Golden Quadrilateral Project where 10% pavements were supposed to be made from cement.

Advocating the concept of concrete roads, ACC Ltd managing director

Sumit Banerjee said such roads are durable, maintenance-free for 20-30 years and have a life span of up to 50 years. "Concrete roads offer 15-20% economy in fuel consumption and 10-15% in vehicle running costs compared to bitumen ones," Banerjee said.

Speaking on his ministry's ambi-

tious plan of building 20 km roads a day, he said the target would be achieved by April this year. "We are building 9 km roads a day and by April, 20 km roads per day will be created. This is a challenge for the construction industry, for consultants and for the government. However, we are on track," Nath said.