



Maharashtra's longest, widest road tunnel sees light of day

The tunnel opened in the presence of Radheshyam Mopalwar, Vice Chairman and Managing Director, MSRDC



The tunnel is 7.78 km long, in two tubes with a total width of 35 metres — 17.50 metres in each tube. Credit: Special Arrangement

In a major achievement, Maharashtra's biggest and widest road-tunnel built on the Mumbai-Nagpur super communication highway has opened.

The Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) and Afcons Infrastructure Ltd, a part of the Shapoorji Pallonji Group, confirmed the development. The mammoth task was completed on May 29, but has only been made public now.

The tunnel opened in the presence of Radheshyam Mopalwar, Vice Chairman and Managing Director, MSRDC.

The tunnel is 7.78 km long, in two tubes with a total width of 35 metres — 17.50 metres in each tube — located between Igatpuri (Nashik district) and Vashala (Thane district), in a thickly forested hilly terrain.

The Hindu Hrudayasamrat Balasaheb Thackeray Maharashtra Samruddhi Mahamarg or the Mumbai-Nagpur super communication highway is one of the most ambitious infrastructure projects.

“We were able to achieve the breakthrough three months ahead of schedule. Despite the second wave of the pandemic, the entire team showed tremendous courage, stamina and caution to stick to their task and achieve the daylighting. This was possible because of active cooperation, support, and guidance from our client, locals and a highly energised execution team,” said Sekhar Das, the leader and project manager of a highly-motivated Package-14 team.

“To successfully accomplish the breakthrough on time, we executed the heading portion and consistently managed more than 200 meters of excavation for nine consecutive months. Our highest was 258.4 metres of heading excavation in a month. We executed 3.3 km from a single tube by providing ventilation through a vertical shaft of 70m. That is an achievement,” Das said.

“We’re aware of the pressures and we’re not letting the intensity go. The team is highly motivated and there is a desire to accomplish. This project is not only vast but also challenging because of the region, the wildlife in and around the area, and the prestige of constructing the state’s longest and widest road tunnels (7.75 km long and 17.5m wide),” he added.

The boring of the tunnel for such a huge area is being done for the first time in Afcons.

“Constructing a 35 m wide long shade tunnel is a first in the organisation. Gantry concreting of the highest perimeter is also a first. Consecutive achievement of more than 200m excavation per month through single face is also a noteworthy achievement,” Das added.