

# State to take Bihar route for better roads

With its roads battered and potholed, Maharashtra will rope in IAS officer who transformed the streets of Nitish Kumar's state

Yogesh.Naik  
@timesgroup.com

For years, Bihar was known for its bad roads while Maharashtra boasted of a good road network. The performance of Maharashtra's Public Works Department (PWD) was praised when Nitin Gadkari headed it between 1995 and 1999.

Now, the tide is turning. The Congress-Nationalist Congress Party-run Democratic Front government has asked the PWD to take lessons from Bihar and IAS officer Pratyay Amrit who transformed the state of roads in Bihar.

Top state officials said Amrit should be called to lecture PWD engineers. "The chief secretary has sent a note to me on this. We are doing the needful," said PWD secretary Dhananjay Dhavad.



REPRESENTATIONAL PHOTO

During each session of the state legislature, MLAs from Maharashtra across party lines criticise the state's Public Works Department

## ONE FOR THE ROAD

Amrit, a 1991 batch officer was hand-picked by Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar to transform roads in the state. Amrit has been a recipient of the Prime Minister's award.

The PWD secretary has been given a copy of a presentation made by Amrit while training IAS officers.

A senior state government officer said the condition of Maharashtra's roads is bad. "In the city, the Amar Mahal flyover on eastern express highway, which is often used by PWD minister Chhagan Bhujbal to travel to his hometown, Nashik, was in a bad shape during monsoon," the official said. "While MMRDA, MSRDC and BMC repaired their flyovers, potholes on this flyover caused huge traffic jams."

The official attributed this to lack

of professionalism in the PWD and said officials only whine about shortage of funds.

While national highways are being maintained by the highway authority and the PWD is supposed to look after roads in the state, including state highways, tehsil and village roads.

Roads in Maharashtra are quite bad and during each session of the state legislature, MLAs across party lines criticise the PWD.

"The PWD must learn professionalism from Amrit who cleansed the PWD and brought transparency to it," said a Congress minister. "Chief minister Prithviraj Chavan recently suggested that a third-party audit be done for PWD roads."

Amrit told *Mumbai Mirror*, "When the government drew flak in Bihar, I brought my department out of the red. If it can happen in Bihar, it can happen anywhere in the country."