Move to Clear Glitches in Infra Projects

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NEW DELHI: The BJP-led NDA Government has asked key infrastructure ministries to come out with a policy note by next month on the various bottlenecks in the project clearances and their respective suggestions to streamline the process.

Actually, the Centre's move comes in the wake of the logjam witnessed during the erstwhile UPA Government's tenure when serious differences among the various ministries on policy issues hampered several big-ticket projects.

The Project Monitoring Group (PMG) under the Cabinet Secretariat has directed all the ministries -- especially Power, Coal, Mines, Railways, Environment and Oil among others -- to submit a policy note stating what kind of troubles they are facing in getting their projects cleared at the policy level and the expected changes in policy.

The PMG, which has been coordinating with all the ministries for faster clearance of the projects, had often received complaints from the ministries about issues pertaining to the policy flaws and it was felt that there was a need to iron out these to ensure economic growth. The Group has now decided to collate the policy issues pertaining to key ministries and will try to remove the glitches related to them.

And all the ministries are busy collating the policy-related issues of their respective departments, besides suggesting changes, which will help to expedite the clearance for the projects. Ministries like the Railways and Coal are preparing the project wise details and want policy changes for certain category of projects.

"The idea is to collect all the policy-related issues and make officials of the respective ministries sit across the table to discuss the contentious issues. This will help to solve the problems related to policy matters then and there," said a senior official.

The Centre may also allow the PMG to take decisions related to the policy level changes which will help to attract investments on a massive scale. And the PMG decisions related to the policy changes taken in consultation with all the stakeholders, including the private players would then directly go to the Cabinet for its approval.

According to the ministry wise data on projects with an outlay of over ₹1,000 crore, some 44 per cent have been held up in the MoEF for want of environment, forest and wildlife clearances. The Ministry of Coal and Ministry of Finance are in second and third place with 16 per cent and nine per cent respectively of the held up projects.