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**ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB) AND GOVERNMENT OF INDIA SIGN \$200 MILLION LOAN AGREEMENT TO HELP UPGRADE 176 KM OF STATE ROADS IN STATE OF JHARKHAND**

**New Delhi, June 3, 2016**  
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The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed today in the national capital an agreement for \$200 million new loan to upgrade 176 Kilometers of State roads in State of Jharkhand. The financing for the Jharkhand State roads II Project will upgrade existing sections of four State roads to two lane standard and will also support improvements in the design, safety and maintenance of the network.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Raj Kumar, Joint Secretary (Multilateral Institutions), Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, who signed the agreement on behalf of Government of India said that for achieving faster growth, Jharkhand needs to improve mobility through better roads. Besides upgrading 176 km of roads, the project will help the State develop an international standard road safety master plan for promoting road safety in Jharkhand, he added. He further said that this will enhance the State's ability to systematically identify, analyze, develop and prioritize critical road safety measures, which will benefit all road users.

Ms M. Teresa Kho, Country Director of ADB's India Resident Mission, who signed the agreement on behalf of ADB, said that ADB has been supporting the State's goals of improving its road connectivity by providing an initial loan for upgrading 311 km of State Roads in 2009. She said that the new assistance will continue the ongoing physical upgrades as well as increasing the institutional capacity of the State Highways Authority of Jharkhand (SHAJ) as an autonomous road development agency. Together, the two projects are rehabilitating 487 km of state highways, she concluded.

Ms. Raj Bala Verma, Chief Secretary, Government of Jharkhand also attended the Loan ceremony and spoke about the importance of the project for the State.

Several safety and environmentally friendly features included in the project design, include over 60 bus stop shelters; 50 km of raised sidewalks in urban areas; 4 km of dedicated bicycle lanes; and solar-powered street lights. The project will also generate employment opportunities for residents of the adjoining areas, including for women, who will get a share of a least 20% of jobs for afforestation work alongside the upgraded roads.

The total cost of the project, due to be completed by December 2019, is \$306.25 million. In addition to ADB's loan, the State Government of Jharkhand will provide counterpart assistance equivalent to \$106.25 million.

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