



# 01.06.2026 NEWS

## TOLL GATES – WHOSE SIDE IS THE LAW ON?

- According to a law enacted by the Central Ministry of Highways in 2008, the minimum distance between one toll plaza and another should be 60 km. However, in practice, this is often not followed.
- This distance rule is made mandatory under Section 8 of the 2008 National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules. Yet, in reality, motorists encounter multiple toll plazas at intervals of just 30 to 40 km.
- Although the Central Ministry of Highways argues that this distance rule does not apply to national highways established before the revised 2008 rules, it is also using loopholes in the wording of the rules to secure exemptions even for new highways, focusing more on increasing revenue.
- Many highways across various states are still operating under 30-year Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) agreements signed before 2008.
- Not only do these highways continue collecting tolls even after the 30-year agreement period ends, but the toll charges are often increased. Since many of these agreements involve private operators, the National Highways Authority justifies that such toll plazas cannot be legally shut down.
- The 2008 rules include a provision allowing exemptions for setting up toll plazas close to each other if it is necessary to improve revenue potential or make highway expansion projects financially viable for investors.
- Similarly, the National Highways Authority legally allows toll plazas within 60 km only in cases involving newly designed permanent bridges, mountain tunnels, or urban bypass roads.
- Likewise, when national highways cross state borders, the authority uses differences in state taxation structures and administrative boundaries as reasons to permit toll plazas very close to each other, thereby increasing revenue.
- Recently, while speaking to reporters in Delhi, Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari openly admitted that having multiple toll plazas within 60 km is fundamentally unfair.
- Between Delhi and Chennai, a distance of around 2,200 km, there are a total of 37 toll plazas, including state highway and privately maintained toll booths. Among them, 20 toll plazas violate the 60 km distance rule.
- Taking Tamil Nadu as an example, on the 700 km Chennai–Kanyakumari highway, 8 out of 10 toll plaza intervals violate the mandatory 60 km rule.
- Examples include: Athur Circle – Salaipudur – Vikravandi: 43 km; Another stretch between toll plazas: 45 km.
- These are considerably shorter than the prescribed distance. After private companies recover road construction costs, toll plazas are generally not permanently closed.

- When the concession period of a private company ends, ownership returns to the Central Government. After that, the National Highways Authority directly manages these toll booths and continues collecting user charges indefinitely, usually at a reduced rate of around 40%, claiming it is necessary for highway maintenance and expansion.
- This reflects the current ground reality.
- The concern is not merely that toll collection continues for maintenance and expansion, but that toll rates keep increasing instead of reducing significantly.
- If toll roads are poorly maintained, logically toll collection should stop. However, neither private operators nor highway authorities are questioned seriously about this.
- Politicians, political leaders, and even the judiciary, who should raise these questions, largely remain silent.
- Ordinary citizens alone bear the burden of paying toll fees, but their concerns rarely receive attention. Social activists and journalists raise their voices, but their efforts often fail to create change.
- The judiciary reacts strongly when judges' vehicles face delays at toll booths, yet it appears less active in addressing unfair toll collection, poor road maintenance, violations of distance norms, or the burden on common people.
- In such a situation, whom can citizens approach for justice?

## **TAIWAN OVERTAKES INDIA IN STOCK MARKET RANKINGS**

- A major shift has taken place in the global financial market. Due to the explosive growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology, Taiwan has pushed India behind and secured the 5th position in global stock market rankings.
  - According to Bloomberg data, Taiwan's total market capitalization has increased to \$4.95 trillion, while the value of the Indian stock market has declined to \$4.92 trillion.
  - Currently, after the United States, China, Japan, and Hong Kong, Taiwan has emerged as the world's 5th largest stock market.
  - Although Taiwan is a much smaller country compared to India in terms of economic size and has a population of only 23 million (2.3 crore), it has surpassed India in stock market value. Let us examine the reasons behind this growth and the challenges faced by the Indian market.
- » Extraordinary Growth of One Company
- The main reason behind Taiwan's exceptional growth is the globally renowned semiconductor and chip manufacturing company, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC).
  - TSMC alone contributes around 42% to Taiwan's benchmark stock index.
  - In 2026 alone (within three months), the company's shares have risen by around 45%. This growth is mainly because TSMC is the global leader in manufacturing advanced chips required for the worldwide AI revolution.
- » Taiwan's New Regulations
- Taiwan has increased the investment limit for domestic mutual funds in a single stock from 10% to 25%.
  - Since TSMC is the only company qualifying significantly under this rule, JP Morgan estimates that an additional \$53 billion (around Rs.50,000 crore) may flow into Taiwan's market.

**Today News...**» Reasons for the Decline in the Indian Stock Market

- India's economy (GDP) is around \$4.15 trillion, whereas Taiwan's GDP is only about \$977 billion, nearly three times smaller than India's. Despite this, India's stock market has faced a decline due to several reasons.
- Foreign Investor Outflow - International investors have considered Indian stocks overvalued and have withdrawn thousands of crores from India in recent months.
- They are redirecting investments toward AI-driven markets such as Taiwan and South Korea.
- Lack of AI-Focused Companies - India lacks large-scale companies directly involved in AI hardware manufacturing.
- India's IT sector is still largely service-oriented, making it difficult to fully capitalize on the global AI investment wave.
- Factors such as: Rising crude oil and fuel prices, Inflation, Decline in the value of the Indian Rupee, Slower revenue growth of companies have affected market sentiment. As a result, the Indian stock market has witnessed nearly a 2% decline this year.

» Is This a Permanent Shift?

- Taiwan's market heavily depends on TSMC, making it more vulnerable. If enthusiasm around AI declines in the future or geopolitical changes occur, Taiwan's market could face setbacks.
- However, market experts believe that India's strong domestic economy and consumer demand will help its stock market regain momentum in the long run.
- Still, it cannot be denied that the global dominance of AI and semiconductor technology has elevated Taiwan to this position.

**CONTROVERSY OVER NEPAL PRIME MINISTER'S  
REMARKS ON INDIAN TERRITORY**

- India shares a 1,251 km border with Nepal. Five Indian states border Nepal : Uttarakhand. Uttar Pradesh. Bihar, West Bengal, Sikkim.
- During British rule, a border agreement was signed between both sides, under which the Kali River was designated as the boundary between the two countries. However, Nepal continues to claim ownership over areas such as : Kalapani, Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura
- Since the route for the Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage passes through these regions, the border dispute has continued for a long time.
- The former mayor of Kathmandu and rapper Balen Shah, 36, became one of the country's youngest political leaders, though the article connects this context to broader political developments.
- What is the Border Dispute? Lipulekh, located in Uttarakhand, is an important border region connecting : India, China, Nepal
- It also serves as an important route for pilgrims traveling to Kailash Mansarovar in the Himalayas.
- Kalapani and Limpiyadhura, also in Uttarakhand, lie near the junction connecting : India, Nepal, Tibet.
- Due to their strategic importance, Nepal claims these regions, and China has supported Nepal's position on the issue. The border dispute therefore remains both a strategic and geopolitical concern between India and Nepal.