New model for toll collection on highways

August 25, 2022

In news— The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is planning to replace toll plazas with cameras that could read number plates, also known as Automatic Number Plate Reader (ANPR) cameras.

About the new model-

- The p**lan is to remove toll plazas on national highways and instead rely on ANPR cameras,** which will read vehicle number plates and **automatically deduct toll from the linked bank accounts of vehicle owners.**
- The model is simple: **Entry and exit of toll roads will have cameras capable of reading number plates,** and toll will be deducted based on these cameras.
- **Not all number plates in India can be read, and only those that have come after 2019 will be registered** by the cameras.
- **The government, in 2019, had come up with a rule mandating passenger vehicles to have company-fitted number plates**, and only these number plates can be read by cameras.
- The government plans to come up with a scheme to replace older number plates.
- A pilot of this scheme is underway and legal amendments to facilitate this transition are also being moved to penalise vehicle owners who skip toll plazas and do not pay.
- **Currently,** about **97 per cent of the total toll collection** of nearly Rs 40,000 crore happens though **FASTags** the remaining 3 per cent pay higher

than normal toll rates for not using FASTags.

- **With FASTags, it takes about 47 seconds per vehicle to cross a toll plaza**.
- While FASTags have eased traffic at toll plazas across the country, congestion is still reported as there are toll gates that need to be crossed after authentication.

- **Apart from ANPR helping to ease congestion, the government is also looking at GPS technology as one of the options for toll collection.**

Problems with ANPR-

- The success of ANPR cameras will depend on creating an ecosystem that is in sync with the requirements of the camera.
- **The biggest problem** being faced during the trials is when things are written on number plates, beyond the nine digit registration number, such as 'govt of India/Delhi' and names of Gods etc.
- Another problem that ANPR cameras face is in **reading number plates on trucks, as most of the time they are hidden or soiled etc.**

FASTag-

- **FASTag is an electronic toll collection system in India,** operated by the National Highway Authority of India.
- **It employs Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology** for making toll payments directly from the prepaid or savings account linked to it or directly toll owner.
- **It is affixed on the windscreen of the vehicle** and enables drivers to drive through toll plazas without stopping for transactions.
- The tag can be purchased from official Tag issuers or participating Banks and if it is linked to a prepaid account, then recharging or top-up can be as per

requirement.