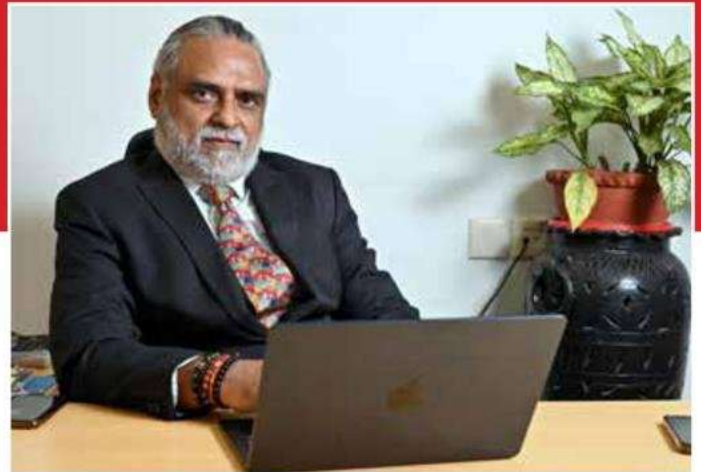


**BHARAT ROAD  
 NETWORK LIMITED**
**BRNL**

Behtar Raaste, Badhta Bharat



*Give us a brief overview of your career and how you got to where you are today. As a visionary leader, what trends or emerging technologies do you foresee impacting the industry in the coming years, and how are you planning to stay ahead of the curve?*

After completing my B.Com from Shriram College of Commerce, I began my career with PwC for my articleship while pursuing CA, which helped me gain valuable international exposure and deepened my understanding of the intricacies of financing. I then transitioned to leadership roles at Apeejay Surrendra Group and Srei Infrastructure Finance Ltd, where I held various CXO positions and acquired diverse leadership experience across multiple group entities. Since 2016, I have been serving as Managing Director of Bharat Road Network Limited, one of India's leading listed highway concession companies, focused on PPP projects from conceptualization to operation.

At Srei, I had the opportunity to broaden my expertise in the infrastructure sector, managing portfolios spanning across roads, ports, water, and economic zones. This role allowed me to navigate the complexities of infrastructure asset management, project development and implementation, and lead several mergers and acquisitions.

With over three decades of experience in the infrastructure and financial sectors, I have witnessed significant transitions and paradigm shifts in both business and operations. In this dynamic industry, where nothing is static, success demands adaptability and the integration of emerging technologies. The infrastructure sector, once labor-intensive, is now rapidly embracing digital transformation, with Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning at the forefront of innovation. These disruptive technologies are revolutionizing projects and significantly enhancing operational efficiency. IoT devices, in particular, will enable real-time monitoring and maintenance of infrastructure assets, while AI and machine learning will optimize resource allocation and predictive maintenance.

In addition, the Automated Traffic Management System (ATMS) is a cutting-edge solution designed to ensure smooth, safe, and efficient travel along highways. The primary goal of ATMS is to improve transportation system efficiency, enhance mobility, and create an environment that fosters the growth of the Intelligent Transport System (ITS) market.

The adoption of sustainable practices and green technologies is also becoming increasingly critical. Renewable energy, energy-efficient construction methods, and smart grid technologies

will play a pivotal role in reducing the carbon footprint of infrastructure projects. There has been an enhanced interest in adopting technologies for developing solar highways that can incorporate smart technology like LED lights within the panels to illuminate lanes at night or during low-visibility conditions, enhancing driver safety while promoting sustainable mode of transportation in line with green energy initiatives by the policymakers. Sensors to monitor traffic flow, vehicle speed, and road conditions in real-time, are other such innovative technological intervention that shall enable more efficient traffic management while helping significantly in reducing congestion.

Furthermore, we are gradually implementing advanced technological solutions in highway construction monitoring and real-time incident reporting through the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). These innovations offer valuable insights for incident reporting, corridor management, and route patrolling, making the industry more effective and efficient.

By embracing these technologies and trends, we are set to witness a paradigm shift in the operating structure of the industry that is aimed to drive innovation, improve project outcomes, and deliver sustainable, future-ready infrastructure solutions.

*What is the greatest obstacle you face to achieving success in your endeavours? How do you overcome it?*

After being part of this industry for so long, I've come to realize that the greatest obstacle to achieve success in this industry lies in navigating the complex regulatory environment and the unpredictable judicial landscape. The market remains a challenge, not only in terms of securing funding but also in providing the necessary expertise to manage the end-to-end project lifecycle. It's undeniable that infrastructure is one of the most intricate business models, requiring sharp acumen to conceptualize, implement, and sustain. To this end, it is crucial to leverage the private sector's efficiencies in the development and management of infrastructure.

Ever since the inception of PPP model in the sector, the initial few years were euphoric phase for policy makers, infrastructure players as well as the financiers. However, barring the initial years, the infrastructure projects started frequently facing the hurdles such as complying with numerous regulations and securing multiple approvals from various government bodies, leading to delays and cost escalations.

Additionally, the quality of the construction in the country has also been a major concern as poor construction quality not just

“Dedicated to building a robust network of roads and highways to enhance transportation in India.”

pose structural failures and safety risks but also causes significant project delivery delays and increased maintenance costs. Projects under public-private partnerships (PPPs) and concessions, such as highway construction, are naturally prone to claims and disputes, with defective work and recurring maintenance further worsening these issues. Despite recognition by policymakers and industry players of the need for global construction technologies, challenges like a lack of skilled workforce, high adoption costs, and integration issues hinder efforts to improve efficiency, quality, and sustainability in infrastructure development through technological advancements in construction.

Whether we adopt EPC, BOT (Toll), HAM, or BOT (Annuity) models, the issues of land acquisition, dispute resolution, and liquidity crises must be adequately addressed. Without resolving these key concerns, volatility will continue to pose a threat to policymakers and infrastructure stakeholders alike. It's essential that the government, authorities, lenders, private sector, and regulators work in tandem, with a mission-focused approach, to transform India into the economic powerhouse envisioned by the Government of India. Despite global economic uncertainties driven by rising trade protectionism and political instability, only the infrastructure sector has the potential to serve as a catalyst in achieving the USD 5 trillion economy target by 2024-25.

Given the capital-intensive nature of infrastructure, significant financial resources are required, and fluctuations in economic conditions can affect both funding availability and investor confidence. To tackle these challenges, BRNL has been actively engaging in dialogue with policymakers to streamline regulatory processes and advocate for more supportive policies. We constantly explore opportunities to diversify funding sources for our projects and strengthening our financial management strategies to build resilience in the face of economic volatility.

By addressing these challenges head-on, we aim to enhance our capacity to successfully deliver infrastructure projects that meet the needs of our stakeholders and contribute to sustainable development

*As a leader, what values and principles guide your leadership style, especially in nurturing your professional team at BRNL?*

As a leader, my values and principles align closely with those of BRNL, which are rooted in three core pillars:

- **Prosperity through Partnership:** At BRNL, we believe that success is achieved through collective efforts. We prioritize collaboration with all stakeholders, leveraging in-house expertise, innovative financial solutions, and trusted partnerships to deliver fast, reliable, and cost-effective transport infrastructure. This collaborative approach drives our mission to create value for everyone involved.
- **Passion for Excellence:** Passion is ingrained in BRNL's DNA. It fuels our commitment to innovation and entrepreneurship, principles that have been central to our growth since inception. This passion for excellence empowers our team to push boundaries and achieve success, even in a fiercely competitive environment. It drives us to continuously improve and make a meaningful impact in everything we do.

- **Professional Entrepreneurship:** BRNL combines deep industry knowledge with a strong entrepreneurial spirit, allowing us to navigate the complexities of infrastructure development in India. This blend of professionalism and entrepreneurship helps us overcome challenges with agility and expertise, ensuring the delivery of high-quality infrastructure solutions.

These values of PPP not only guide my leadership but also foster a culture where our team is encouraged to innovate, collaborate, and excel.

*Would you like to share a piece of advice for the young aspirants?*

Certainly. My advice to young aspirants is to embrace continuous learning and stay adaptable. The world is evolving rapidly, and it waits for no one. We must keep that in mind and hence shall always strive to remaining curious and open towards the new change to achieve success. It is also crucial to constantly look for opportunities to innovate and challenge the pre-existing method and mechanism. Innovation is essential for maintaining relevance and competitiveness in any industry. Without a commitment to thinking and acting differently, our progress will never be truly comprehensive.

I would also advice the youngsters to be proactive in identifying and pursuing new projects, ideas, or roles that align with their individual passions and strengths. In this rapidly evolving and fast-moving world, I also wish to remind the youngsters that success is not just measured by your pace of reaching the goals but also about enjoying the journey and making a positive impact to the society along the way.



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