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Finance ministry to urge states to adopt 'Gati Shakti'

The Financial Express,
October 29, 2024

Since its launch on October 13, 2021, Rs 15 lakh crore worth projects of Rs 500 crore and above have been evaluated, mostly central sector projects.

Finance ministry to urge states to adopt 'Gati Shakti'. (Image: Getty)

The Union finance ministry will soon write to the state governments urging them to bring their infrastructure projects on board the digital planning tool PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, in order to take multi-modal connectivity to the next level, sources told FE.



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Since its launch on October 13, 2021, Rs 15 lakh crore worth projects of Rs 500 crore and above have been evaluated, mostly central sector projects. These include Master Plans for roads, energy, minerals, cement corridors, high-density corridors, and the rail network.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman recently reviewed the progress of Gati Shakti and asked officers to write to states to onboard their infrastructure projects beyond a threshold into the planning tool. Also, she said central ministries have to be more proactive and bring in more projects into the Gati Shakti fold. Currently, central projects Rs 500 crore and more are to be covered.

“To take it forward, the finance minister directed to write to states and central ministries. Accordingly, we will be writing them soon,” a senior official said.

So far, nine states and Union Territories (UTs) have issued instructions for making state master plans using Gati Shakti platform.

Nine states are more active in this regard: Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Nagaland, Gujarat, Manipur and Uttarakhand, Andaman & Nicobar, Puducherry and Arunachal Pradesh. They have issued government orders in this regard.

PM Gati Shakti’s digital platform aims to provide multimodal connectivity infrastructure to various economic zones by bringing together 16 Ministries including railways and roads for integrated planning and coordinated implementation of projects in cooperation with the state governments.

Under this programme, the government is also trying to simplify time-taking application approval processes and the multiplicity of regulatory norms. The programme intends to prioritize all–mega infrastructure connectivity targets by FY25, the terminal year of the Rs 111 trillion ambitious National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) in six years through FY25.

Over recent years, the centre has placed infrastructure development at the centre stage through both policy and financial interventions, especially by way of increased focus on capital spending. Its capex allocation during FY22 and FY24 grew by an average 30% on-year.

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Prime Minister Modi To Launch Rs 4,900 Crore Worth Of Road, Rail And Water Projects In Gujarat Tomorrow

Swarajya,
October 28, 2024

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Gujarat on Monday (28 October) to inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for multiple projects worth around Rs 4,900 crore, aimed at benefiting several districts in the state, including Amreli, Jamnagar, Morbi, Devbhoomi Dwarka, Junagadh, Porbandar, Kachchh, and Botad.

In Amreli, the Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone for road projects worth over Rs 2,800 crore.

These projects include the four-laning of sections on NH 151, NH 151A, and NH 51, along with the Junagadh bypass.



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Additionally, the foundation stone will be laid for the remaining four-laning stretch from the Dhrol bypass in Jamnagar to Amran in Morbi district.

The Prime Minister will also dedicate to the nation Bhuj-Naliya Rail Gauge Conversion Project, completed at a cost of around Rs 1,100 crores.

This extensive project features 24 major bridges, 254 minor bridges, 3 road overbridges and 30 road underbridges, and will play a crucial role in enhancing the socio-economic development of Kachchh district.

Furthering water infrastructure, the Prime Minister will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for projects worth over Rs 700 crore in the water supply sector.

The Navda to Chavand bulk pipeline will deliver 28 crore litres of water to about 67 lakh people across 36 cities and 1,298 villages spanning Botad, Amreli, Junagadh, Rajkot, and Porbandar districts.

In addition, the foundation stone of Phase 2 of the Pasavi Group Augmentation Water Supply Scheme in Bhavnagar district will be laid, benefiting 95 villages across Mahuva, Talaja, and Palitana talukas.

The Prime Minister's visit will also include laying the foundation stone for tourism-related initiatives, with a focus on transforming the Karli Recharge Reservoir at Mokarsagar in Porbandar into a world-class eco-tourism destination.

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Gujarat infra boost: PM Modi to unveil projects worth over Rs 4800 crore on October 28

FE Online,
October 29, 2024

Among the major projects, the Prime Minister will inaugurate and launch foundation stones for water supply initiatives valued at Rs 705 crore.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to inaugurate and lay foundation stones for development projects worth over Rs 4800 crore in Amreli, Gujarat, on October 28, an official release said. (Freepik) Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to inaugurate and lay foundation stones for development projects worth over Rs 4800 crore in Amreli, Gujarat, on October 28, an official release said. This extensive series of projects includes around 1600 initiatives spread across multiple districts, such as Jamnagar, Morbi, Devbhoomi Dwarka, Junagadh, Porbandar, Kutch, and Botad, all aimed at boosting the state's infrastructure, water resources, and tourism.

Key Water Supply Initiatives: Bharatmata Sarovar and More

Among the major projects, the Prime Minister will inaugurate and launch foundation stones for water supply initiatives valued at Rs 705 crore. This includes the Bharatmata Sarovar, a significant reservoir built on the Gagadio river at a cost of Rs 35 crore. Developed through a Public-Private Partnership between the Gujarat Government and the Dholakia Foundation, the Bharatmata Sarovar boasts a capacity of 24.50 crore liters, providing critical irrigation support and enhancing groundwater levels for nearby communities.



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In addition to these water supply initiatives, PM Modi will also inaugurate 1000 pit recharge, bore recharge, and well recharge projects, alongside 590 Water Resource Department projects valued at Rs 20 crore. The Navda to Chavand bulk pipeline in Botad district will also be inaugurated, delivering an additional 28 crore liters of water to over 1,298 villages and 36 towns in districts including Amreli, Junagadh, and Rajkot. Additionally, projects under the Pasavi Group Augmentation Water Supply Scheme will benefit Bhavnagar district, improving water access for nearly 95 villages.

Transportation infrastructure is also a focus, with over Rs 2800 crore allocated to National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) projects, including the four-laning of the Dhrol-Bhadra-Patiya sections of NH 151A, costing Rs 768 crore, and the four-laning of Dwarka-Khambhaliya-Devariya sections at Rs 1025 crore. Foundation stones will be laid for a project connecting Dhrol Bypass in Jamnagar to Amran in Morbi, with an investment of Rs 626 crore.

Further bolstering regional connectivity, PM Modi will inaugurate the Bhuj-Naliya gauge conversion project, a Rs 1094 crore undertaking involving the construction of 24 major and 254 minor bridges in Kutch district. The initiative is expected to stimulate socio-economic growth in the area.

To support sustainable tourism, the Prime Minister will also lay the foundation for Rs 200 crore in eco-tourism projects. This includes the development of a world-class eco-tourism site at the Karli Recharge Reservoir in Mokarsagar, Porbandar district, which will boost tourism while preserving the local environment.

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Dedicated Freight Corridors Can Add Rs 16,000 Crore To India's GDP: Study

Swarajya,
October 29, 2024

In a recent study conducted by the University of New South Wales (UNSW) in Australia, India's Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFCs) are projected to boost the country's GDP by Rs 16,000 crore.

The findings, shared by the Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited (DFCCIL), highlight the transformative economic impact of the corridors, particularly the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (WDFC).

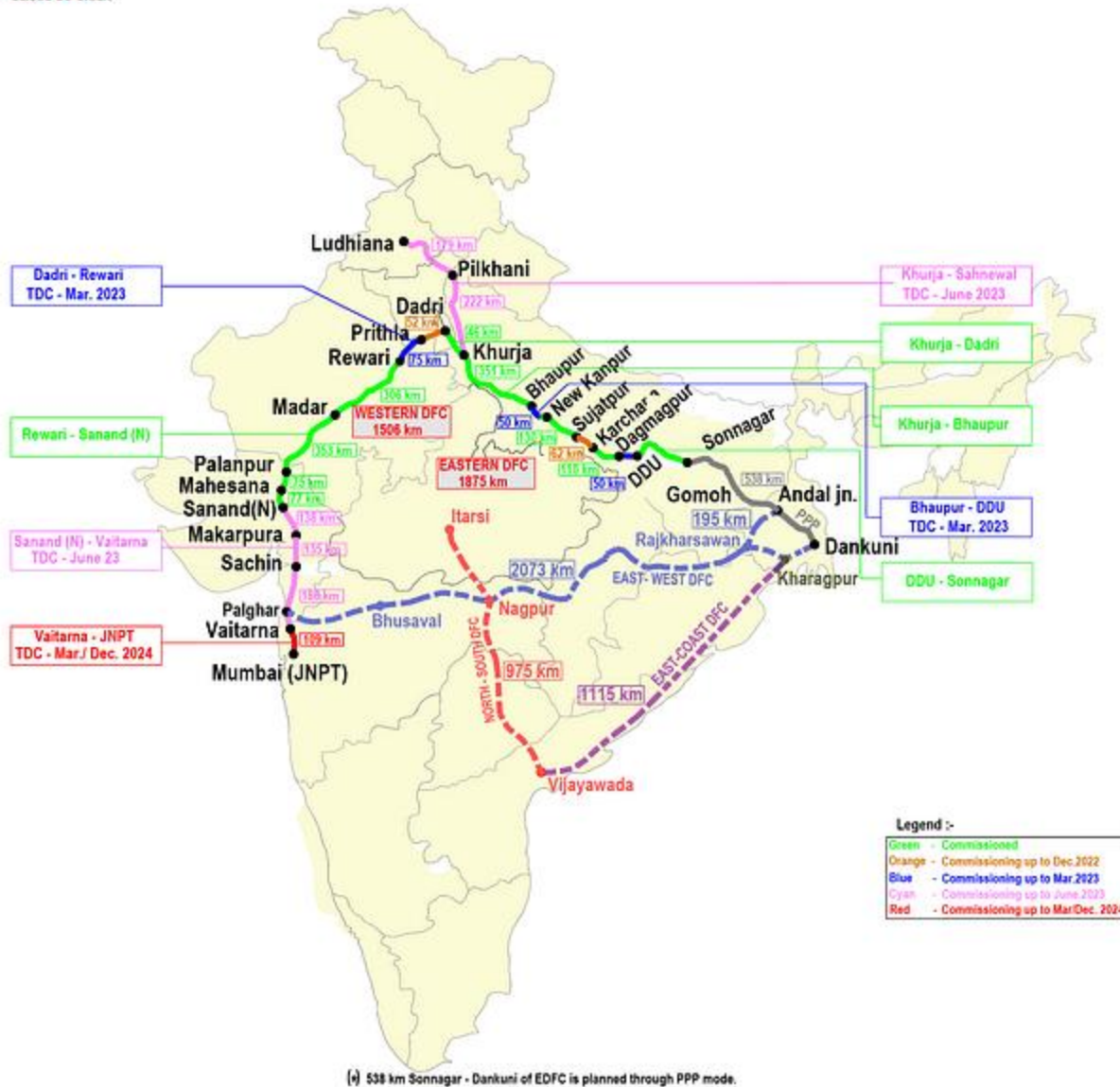
The operationalisation of the WDFC has significantly reduced freight costs and travel times, leading to commodity price reductions of up to 0.5 per cent, DFCCIL reported.

Furthermore, the study indicates that DFCs have contributed to 2.94 per cent of the revenue growth achieved by Indian Railways between the fiscal years 2018–19 and 2022–23, with over 10 per cent of India's rail freight now managed through DFC routes.

The DFC network, spanning 2,843 kilometers and passing through 56 districts across seven states, is nearing completion at 96.4 per cent as of October 2024.

The Eastern DFC (EDFC), stretching 1,337 kilometers from Ludhiana to Sonnagar, is fully operational, while the WDFC, covering 1,506 kilometers from Dadri to Mumbai, is 93.2 per cent complete.

These corridors connect key industrial hubs, including coal mines, thermal power plants, cement factories, and large ports such as Mundra, Kandla, Pipavav, and Hazira.



Project map of DFCs

Trains utilising these dedicated tracks have demonstrated impressive average speeds ranging from 50 to 60 km per hour, with the potential for further acceleration up to 100 km per hour. This marks a significant improvement compared to the average speeds of goods trains on conventional tracks, which typically range from 20 to 25 km per hour.

In addition to economic growth, the study highlights the DFC’s “Social-Equalising Effect,” noting that regions with lower per-capita GDPs experienced significant economic advantages. The benefits have been most pronounced in the western regions closest to the WDFC, with regions further away also



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experiencing positive economic impacts due to reduced transportation costs, reports Economic Times.

Currently, an average of 325 trains operate daily on the DFCs—an increase of 60 per cent from last year—underscoring the corridors' rising importance in India's logistics and supply chain infrastructure.

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121 Railway Stations Set For Revamp With Rs 4,605 Crore In South Central Railway Zone Under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme

Swarajya,
October 29, 2024

The South Central Railway (SCR) is embarking on a major overhaul of 121 railway stations under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS), with a total investment of Rs 4,605 crore.

The ABSS aims to enhance and modernise railway stations throughout the Indian Railways network. The scheme currently intends to upgrade and modernize a total of 1275 stations across the Indian Railway system.

Key stations like Secunderabad, Tirupati, Nellore, and Rajahmundry are among the ones receiving upgrades. Cherlapalli will also see the development of a new satellite terminal.

As part of efforts to ease congestion for pilgrims heading to Tirupati, the Tiruchanur railway station will be transformed into a crossing station. Additionally, development proposals are under review for Renigunta and Gudur stations, potentially adding to the expanding infrastructure.

Feasibility studies for stations such as Kacheguda, Lingampalli, and Vijayawada are ongoing, with detailed project reports nearing completion. The station upgrades will focus on improving aesthetics with enhanced facades, widened approach roads, and the integration of local art and culture. Other enhancements include the installation of LED signage, improved landscaping, upgraded waiting areas, and clearer, user-friendly signage.

In other developments, SCR General Manager Arun Kumar Jain has introduced 'Looker Studio,' an awareness initiative by the Railway Protection Force (RPF). This project utilizes advanced AI tools to produce educational videos in multiple languages, including Hindi, English, and Telugu. The videos, featuring multimedia elements such as voiceovers, background music, and animations, aim to raise awareness about security and safe travel for both the public and railway personnel.

ABSS Scheme

Amrit Bharat Station scheme envisages development of stations on a continuous basis with a long-term approach. It involves preparation of Master Plans and their implementation in phases to improve the amenities at the stations like improvement of station access, circulating areas, waiting halls, toilets, lift/escalators as necessary, cleanliness, free Wi-Fi, kiosks for local products through schemes like 'One Station One Product', better passenger information systems, Executive Lounges, nominated spaces for business meetings, landscaping etc. keeping in view the necessity at each station.



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The scheme also envisages improvement of building, integrating the station with both sides of the city, multimodal integration, amenities for Divyangjans, sustainable and environment friendly solutions, provision of ballastless tracks, 'Roof Plazas' as per necessity, phasing and feasibility and creation of city centres at the station in the long term.

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Shimla set to get biggest ropeway in India, second biggest in the world – All you need to know

The Hindu Business Line,
October 29, 2024

Shimla Ropeway would be the biggest project in India and the second biggest in the world after Bolivia," said Agnihotri.

World's second-largest ropeway project, World's largest ropeway project, ropeway himachal pradesh, shimla ropeway, largest ropeway India, Mukesh Agnihotri , Mukesh Agnihotri news

The ropeway will feature 660 trolleys across 13 stations, capable of transporting 6,000 passengers per hour.

Himachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister and Transport Minister Mukesh Agnihotri on Thursday (October 24) outlined an ambitious vision for the state's infrastructure, highlighting key projects like the Shimla Ropeway, ongoing railway developments, and improvements to the Himachal Road Transport Corporation (HRTC).

During a press conference in Shimla, Agnihotri stated, "Shimla Ropeway would be the biggest project in India and the second biggest in the world after Bolivia." This 14-kilometer-long project, aimed at easing traffic congestion in Shimla, is expected to generate direct employment for 250 people and indirect employment for over 20,000.

660 trolleys to transport 6,000 passengers per hour

The ropeway will feature 660 trolleys across 13 stations, capable of transporting 6,000 passengers per hour, with a strong focus on transforming tourism and promoting environmental sustainability. Agnihotri also asked residents to support the project for its wide-reaching benefits.

Agnihotri emphasised that this project is not only about reducing tourist traffic during peak seasons but also about putting Shimla on the international map. With a budget of Rs 1,734 crore, the project is advancing, with the Detailed Project Report (DPR) completed by a foreign consultant funded by the state government.

Enhancing railway connectivity

Discussing railway projects, Agnihotri reaffirmed the government's dedication to improving connectivity, mentioning the Bhanupali-Bilaspur-Beri and Chandigarh-Baddi railway lines. The Bhanupali-Bilaspur-Beri line, initially budgeted at Rs 1,047 crore, now faces escalating costs due to land acquisition issues, raising the state's share to Rs 2,583 crore.



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Agnihotri said that the importance of these projects and called for full funding of the Bhanupali-Bilaspur-Beri railway line as a strategic defence project leading to Leh.

HRTC's electric bus upgrade

Turning to public transport, Agnihotri announced plans to modernize the HRTC fleet with 327 electric buses. He acknowledged the financial difficulties HRTC faces due to subsidised rides for women and students but stressed the corporation's essential role in serving the community, especially during emergencies. The introduction of tracking facilities to improve service management was also highlighted.

“HRTC is not just a transport service; it plays a vital role in the community, especially during emergencies and festivals,” he said.

Deputy CM Agnihotri's detailed presentation showcased the state government's commitment to advancing infrastructure through innovative ropeway, railway, and public transport projects. These efforts aim to boost tourism, promote economic growth, and elevate Himachal Pradesh's profile both nationally and internationally.

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