

# Govt looks to integrate transport planning

## Single nodal ministry may helm new mechanism

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Aiming at resolving multisectoral bottlenecks in transport, the Centre is looking to unify planning in this area under a mechanism to be led by a single ministry, *Business Standard* has learnt from official sources.

“A high-level meeting took place in March, where it was expressed that this inter-ministerial mechanism be set up, with an emphasis on transport planning becoming integrated for planning, both in the short and long terms. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways made some points to go forward,” said a senior government official aware of the matter.

The government has an inter-ministerial consultative mechanism for infrastructure planning and execution — the Prime Minister Gati-Shakti framework.



ILLUSTRATION: BINAY SINHA

The new framework being considered is likely to work in coordination with Gati-Shakti but could have a slightly different remit.

“The Gati-Shakti platform is there, but a need was felt to have a separate transport-planning mechanism. While Gati-Shakti looks at infrastructure gaps and when those need to be filled, a comprehensive transport-planning body would look at which modes of transport will be best suited to meet the gaps, keeping

long-term goals in mind,” another top-level official said.

He added Gati-Shakti’s primary role was to eliminate overlaps and bring in fast-track execution, and it covered all infrastructure sectors. An integrated transport-planning framework would entail a granular assessment of modal needs and past trends.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is working on a plan and its vision for integrated transport plan-

## A NEW FRAMEWORK

- The new framework is likely to work in consonance with Gati-Shakti
- The transport planning body would look at which modes of transport will be best suited
- An integrated framework would do a granular assessment of modal needs and past trends to develop a comprehensive plan
- Transport ministry like railways or highways will likely head this framework

ning, which it will present to senior officials at the highest levels of the government.

Queries sent to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways and the Ministry of Railways on Monday remained unanswered till the time of going to press.

According to people aware of the developments, the Niti Aayog, which coordinates with all infrastructure ministries for the infrastructure and monetisation pipelines, and the Department for Promotion of

Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), which spearheads the Prime Minister Gati-Shakti National Master Plan, have shown an interest to be the lead departments in this exercise.

However, it is likely that a transport ministry like railways or highways could steer this framework once it is formed.

The government, at least in initial discussions, is not looking to create a statutory authority for this. “Creating a statutory body creates red tape, which will end up defeating the purpose of such an exercise,” the first official said.

With congestion on railways and quality concerns with national highways, the National Democratic Alliance government in its third term has made the transport sector a priority, according to officials.

Last week, Minister of Railways and Information and Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnaw said the Union Cabinet had, within months of the new government’s formation in June 2024, sanctioned transportation projects worth ₹4.18 trillion.