

# Gujarat seeks funds for heritage protection

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The state government on Monday urged the central government to provide funding to states for protection of heritage structures, and also sought more funds under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) and other schemes.

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State urban development minister Nitin Patel said at the meeting in Delhi of the National Development Council sub-committee on urbanisation that the Centre should give separate funds for maintenance, repair and renovation of forts, palaces and heritage structures, which do not fall under the Archaeological Survey of India. "Heritage buildings are mostly located in Gujarat and Rajasthan. The Centre should give separate funds for protection of such structures," Patel said.

He said that the cities that do well should be encouraged by allotting special funds for further growth under JNNURM-II. He suggested that cost escalation should be kept in mind while allocating funds for projects.

"The funds for projects under JNNURM are allotted on the basis of estimated cost when the proposal is submitted. But, the cost of the project escalates significantly by the time grants are allotted. The Centre should bring a fresh provision to allot more funds," he said.

The minister also demanded financial assistance from Centre for multi-level parking, purchasing of CCTV cameras for better traffic management, construction of ring roads, by-pass roads, among others. He also urged for viability gap funding for Metro projects, and similar funding for smaller cities where sufficient public transport services are not available.

Patel suggested setting up of district urban development authority on the lines of district rural development agency. Pointing out that a number of projects were held up in the state due to pending sanctions in railways ministry, Patel suggested that certain sanctioning powers be given to district level railway officers.

