

# Will raise money from small investors for road projects; not interested in foreign investment: Gadkari



ANI

Union Minister [Nitin Gadkari](#) on Saturday said the government will not take money from foreign [investors](#) to build infrastructure projects like [roads](#), and instead mobilise funds from small investors willing to put Rs 1 lakh for an assured return of 8 per cent per annum. The minister said a Rs 8,000-crore project to build road over bridges over railway crossings in towns and cities is also under the works, but the announcement will be made after the budget.

"I usually give them (foreign investors) tea and say thank you," the Union minister said.

Gadkari said his department does works of over Rs 5 lakh crore a year and added that [foreign investors](#) are now making a beeline to invest in Indian [road projects](#) but clearly stated a lack of interest on his side to engage.

"I do not want to make the rich (more) richer, but will collect money from farmers, farm labourers, constables, clerks and government employees," Gadkari said, addressing an event organised by Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture.

Gadkari said the plan involves a minimum investment of Rs 1 lakh from every small investor which will be for a specified road project and assured a return of 8 per cent per annum with sovereign guarantee as against a 4.5-5 per cent earned on bank deposits.

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The investment proposal is pending with capital markets regulator Sebi and once their nod is received, the same will be launched, Gadkari said.

He said over the years, many foreign investors like Australia's Macquarie or Canadian pensioners have invested in India but now, it is essential for us to mobilise funds by ourselves.

Recalling an instance where a foreign investor had declined to invest in a Rs 1,500 crore masala bond roadshow a few years ago, the Union minister said now the same entities are making a beeline for investments and added that a few days ago an investor approached him offering to invest up to Rs 5,000 crore.

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Gadkari said the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) is raising loans at very competitive rates of 5.75 or 5.85 per cent at present and has two banks competing with offers of Rs 25,000 crore loans at present.

The minister listed a slew of projects which are being executed - including the Delhi-Mumbai access controlled expressway which will be open for traffic in a year - and asserted that he does not see a crunch for funds in the foreseeable future.

The Delhi-Mumbai expressway will be extended to the nearby JNPT, the country's largest container port, as well and a Rs 660-crore multi-tier intersection is being planned in Panvel, he said.

The projects being carried out will reduce distances, travel time, pollution and also fuel, and help the economy, he said.

Gadkari said fuel alternatives like ethanol, liquefied natural gas, green hydrogen need to be used the most for saving forex on crude, curbing pollution and also helping domestic industry and sugar growers.

Probably referring to the corporate group Essar's interests, Gadkari said a brother of Prashant Ruia showed him two trucks running on LNG in Nagpur a few days ago, which will help save up to 60 per cent on the running costs after fitting a LNG kit costing Rs 8 lakh and its cost can be recovered in 295 days.

Admitting to lower calorific value of ethanol being low, Gadkari said a team of Russian scientists who have created a part to increase the efficiency are in India at present and met Petroleum Secretary and Indian Oil Corporation chairman before visiting facilities in Faridabad.

Gadkari said he has planned a logistics park in Sangli which has a concrete road with industrial infrastructure on either sides. The road will allow for landing of aircraft, and as a result, the logistics costs will reduce for the users, he said.