

PARVATMALA-AN EFFICIENT AND SAFE ALTERNATE TRANSPORT NETWORK

Relevant for: Indian Economy | Topic: Infrastructure: Roads

Developing an efficient transport network is a big challenge in hilly areas. The rail and air transport networks are limited in these areas, while the development of road network has technical challenges. In this backdrop, Ropeways have emerged as a convenient and safe alternate transport mode.

Government has decided to develop Ropeways in hilly areas of the country. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MORTH) has so far been responsible for development of Highways and regulating the road transport sector across the country. However, in February 2021, the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules 1961 was amended, which enables the Ministry to also look after the development of Ropeways and Alternate Mobility Solutions. The move will give a boost to the sector by setting up a regulatory regime. The Ministry will also have responsibility for development of ropeway and alternative mobility solutions technology, as well as construction, research, and policy in this area. Formulation of institutional, financial, and regulatory framework for the technology will also fall under the ambit of this allocation.

Union Finance Minister Smt Nirmala Sitharaman, while presenting Union Budget for 2022-23 announced National Ropeways Development Programme – “Parvatmala” -- will be taken up on PPP mode, which will be a preferred ecologically sustainable alternative in place of conventional roads in difficult hilly areas, The idea is to improve connectivity and convenience for commuters, besides promoting tourism. This may also cover congested urban areas, where conventional mass transit system is not feasible. The Finance Minister announced that contracts for 8 ropeway projects for a length of 60 km would be awarded in 2022-23. The scheme is being presently started in regions like Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Jammu & Kashmir and the other North Eastern states.

MAJOR FACTORS DRIVING ROPEWAY INFRASTRUCTURE

BENEFITS OF ROPEWAYS

This mode of transportation will enable mobility to people living in difficult areas and help them become part of the mainstream. Villagers / farmers living in such areas will be able to sell their produces in other areas, which in turn will help them grow their income.

MoU WITH UTTARAKHAND

MORTH has initiated a study carried out by M/s McKinsey & Co. for Ropeway development in the country. The study suggested that MORTH may take National Ropeway Development Programme named “Parvatmala”, similar to the “Bharatmala” programme. An MoU has been signed with Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board (UTDB), Govt. of Uttarakhand, for development of Ropeways in the State. Initially, seven projects have been identified in Uttarakhand. DPR for Kedarnath and Hemkund Sahib Ropeway is in progress and NIT for the same has been invited. Proposals have also been received from Governments of Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Maharashtra, Jammu and Kashmir for development of Ropeways.

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