

Uttar Pradesh cabinet grants approval to ropeway project in Varanasi

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LUCKNOW: In a major push to the ropeway project in Varanasi, the Cabinet on Wednesday gave approval to the viability gap funding, its feasibility report, request for proposal (RFP) documents, draft concession document, etc. The 3.65 km project will start from Varanasi Cantt and go up to the Church Crossing via Sajan Tiraha and Rath Yatra. As per estimate, 80,000 passengers will use the ropeway per day.

“The decision to have the ropeway was taken in light of the massive pressure being exerted by transport on the city’s infrastructure. On October 21, 2021, the housing and urban planning department set up a bid evaluation committee. The project will be developed in public private partnership mode,” an official said.

CABINET DECISIONS

➤ **Approval to viability gap funding and feasibility report of Varanasi Ropeway project**

➤ **Bhatkhande to become full-fledged university**

➤ Grant to sports associations increased from **₹15,000 per year to ₹2 lakh**

➤ **New Khandsari Policy** issued for **5 years** against practice of an annual policy

➤ Increase in honorarium of panchayat members

➤ Land to be made available for **NCR Regional Rapid Transit System**



➤ One-time settlement scheme to be launched by excise department to recover dues of **₹54 crore**

It was decided that Centre will contribute 20% to the Rs 410 crore project as viability gap funding and the same amount will be contributed by the state government. The remaining 60% will be put in by the concessionaire.

In another major decision, the Cabinet gave approval for making Bhatkhande Music Institute, a deemed university in the state capital, a full-fledged state university.

Sources said institutes like Kathak Academy, Sangeet Natak Academy, Lalit Kala Academy etc., will be affiliated to it and will issue degrees.

“Once it becomes a full-fledged university, its scope will expand to the entire state. It will issue degrees and can even associate with foreign universities and promote research,” said an official.

The new Khandsari Licensing Policy has also been issued, for five years this time instead of a single year. The policy will help in promoting small and cottage industries, said officials.

Under the policy, licences will be given to power crushers and khandsari outside a radial distance of 7.5 km of sugar mills. It will not be required for production of jaggery by power crushers or mini crushers while a minimum of 60 days of crushing in a season will be mandatory for each such unit.

The application would be online and will be granted clearance within 100 hours. The applicants will require a no objection certificate (NoC) from the regional pollution control board and the certificate of registration from the state excise department.

The excise department has come up with a one-time settlement scheme to recover dues of Rs 53.91 crore up to March 31, 2015. Those who owe dues will have to submit an application to the district excise officer for issuing an approval. The applicant will have to clear at least 50% of the dues within 30 days of the approval and the remaining within 60 days.

The government has also increased the annual grant to sports associations from Rs 15,000 to Rs 2 lakh under Eklavya Sports Fund.