

Niti prods railways to create infrastructure for electric vehicles at stations

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NEW DELHI: Niti Aayog has suggested that railways should designate at least 20% of the parking capacity at railway stations or office complex for setting up electric vehicle charging bays or battery charging and swapping stations, and also install at least one EV charging point at each targeted manned level crossing and railway colony.

The proposals are part of the government think tank's initiative to propagate electric vehicles, especially charging infrastructure, and domestic manufacturing.

The draft policy under discussion has also recommended supply of renewable energy to the charging facilities in line with Railways' goal to become "Net-Zero Carbon Emitter" by 2030, official sources told TOI.

Niti Aayog has suggested railways could start with the 123 railway stations

that have been redeveloped and subsequently all suburban stations should have charging provision.

As part of the plan, it has been proposed that the railway could recognise that there is significant scope to add EV charging infrastructure in the list of public amenities at the major railway stations. In any case, given the development of payment tools in the country, UPI or Fastag could be used for the purpose given that RailTel infrastructure is available across the country.

"Railway stations are landmark locations and they play a unique role in the entire transport sector which make them strategic locations for providing public charging solutions for EVs. They serve as important multi-modal transit nodes and thus, attract high volumes of traffic from various commuters, taxis, freight forwarders, etc. Plus, suburban railway stations serve a large number of daily commuters and act as pick-up and drop points for last-mile connectivity. So, there will be charging demand from private as well as paratransit vehicles," an officer said.

Government sources said given the relevance of battery swapping technique, particularly for electric two- and three-wheelers, Railways has also been asked to consider the operational requirements of a stack battery charging system.