

Govt banks on two flagship programmes for connectivity

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NEW DELHI: The government will roll out two flagship connectivity programmes — construction of 8,000-km greenfield or new alignment national highways under Bharatmala-II with nearly Rs 3 lakh crore investment and development of at least 50 ropeway projects under Parvatmala for hill states entailing over Rs 20,000 crore — in the next financial year.

Top officials from the road transport ministry and NHAI have shared the plan for these programmes with industry players. Some of the identified greenfield highway stretches include Pune-Bengaluru, Chennai-Trichy, Varanasi-Kolkata, Gorakhpur-Siliguri and Hyderabad-Bengaluru.

SMOOTH RIDE

For Seamless Connectivity Under Bharatmala (highways) & Parvatmala (ropeways)

Bharatmala-II (New)

Total length

Approx 8,000km

Investment: ₹3 lakh cr

Key stretches: Pune-Bengaluru, Chennai-Trichy, Varanasi-Kolkata, Gorakhpur-Siliguri, Hyderabad-Bengaluru

Paravatmala

- Govt to launch a programme for ropeways in 2022-23
- 50 proposals from hill states for the programme
- 8 projects to be bid out by March 2023



Bharatmala-I (Ongoing)

Total length: 34,800km

Original estimated investment

₹5.35 lakh cr

Revised estimate

₹10 lakh cr

Timeline: Award of all remaining works by 2024-25; Completion by 2026-27

Officials said Uttarakhand, J&K, Himachal Pradesh and Manipur have forwarded nearly 50 proposals for ropeway projects to the Centre and an entity under the NHAI is looking at different models for its implementation, including the government paying up to 50% of the project cost during the construction phase.

Under Bharatmala-II, NHAI has been preparing the detailed project reports for stretches so that they can start inviting bids as soon as the scheme gets go ahead from the Union cabinet. They said this work can be taken up along with ongoing projects under Bharatmala-I, which will miss the original deadline of 2022-23 considering "major changes" in the programme compared to what was envisaged. The revised estimate for Bharatmala-I has almost doubled to Rs 10.25 lakh crore.

The second big change has been the change in plan to develop 2,500 km as 'expressways' compared to the original plan of 800 km. "We are developing 5,000 access-controlled highways under this programme, which was not in the original plan. So, the expenses towards land acquisition and civil construction have almost doubled," said an official.