

Kashi ropeway's first cable car undergoes alignment test

Raises Hope Of Trial Run of The Service In Next 3 Months

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Varanasi: Wheels of the first gondola along with a maintenance vehicle rolled on cables between Rathyatra and Vidyapeeth stations of the ropeway service being introduced as public transport for the first time in the country.

With the testing of the cable and gondola on Thursday, the possibility of a trial run of the service in three months has increased. Talking to TOI after the rolling out of the gondola on cables, pro-

ject director of the National Highway Logistic Management Limited (NHLML) Pujan Mishra said, "In the language of ropeway engineering, rolling out the gondola with a maintenance vehicle was an alignment test. At the height of 45 metres from the road surface, this test was conducted in a 1.3 km area between Rathyatra and Vidyapeeth stations of the ropeway service at intermittent speeds up to two metres per second for almost two hours."

NHLML, the agency executing the ropeway project,



Alignment test of ropeway being conducted in Varanasi on Thursday

started the alignment test of the ropeway service after the last hurdles of finalising the land for the construction of the final tower number 29 and station-5 (Godowlia) were cleared.

"The land has been handed over to us by the nodal agency Varanasi Development Authority. But, due to the Maha Kumbh crowd, taking heavy machines to begin civil works will be possible next month only," she said, mentioning that 74% of the works of the ropeway project have been completed and the trial run would be started between Cantt Railway Station, Vidyapeeth and Rathyatra stations soon.

In view of the ground real-

ity of the congested city of Kashi, the government decided to introduce the ropeway as public transport here. The foundation of the ambitious Rs 807 crore ropeway project was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 24, 2023. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath not only implemented the PM's ambitious ropeway project but also ensured that the work is fast-tracked to improve the public transport system in the historical city.

However, difficulties were faced in getting a suitable place for its last station near Kashi Vishwanath Dham. The district administration and the VDA were under pressure as three stations, in-

cluding the origination point at Varanasi Junction (Cantt Railway Station), Kashi Vidyapeeth, and Rathyatra, had already reached the verge of completion. The installation of equipment for the ropeway at Varanasi Junction, Kashi Vidyapeeth and Rathyatra stations as well as the facade works is in progress. Due to these reasons, the officials had only the option to search for a place near Godowlia crossing as the alignment of the ropeway could not be changed. The search ended in Novlast.

After Mexico and Bolivia, the world's third and the country's first urban transport ropeway is aimed at shifting the load of over one

lakh passengers, especially pilgrims and tourists, from road to it. It will take about 16 minutes to reach Cantt Railway Station from Godowlia. About 150 gondolas will run from an estimated height of 45 to 50 metres.

Passengers will have a pleasant experience in all seasons and weather conditions in specially designed gondolas. Each gondola's 10-seater cabin will give comfort to the passengers while disabled persons will also not face any difficulty in boarding it even with wheelchairs. Apart from proper ventilation, the specially designed reflective glass windows on gondolas will reduce overheating and solar glare.