

Metrolite: Metros that ply on road, are cost-effective

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New Delhi: The government is set to bring in a new mass transport system — LRT-Metrolite — for Tier-II and Tier-III cities. Metrolite will be dedicated rail corridors in cities and towns with tracks on surface (like railways) instead of elevated or underground stretches as is the case with Metro rail corridors across the country.

Sources said the urban affairs ministry has prepared the plan and finalised the standards and specifications for Metrolite and has sent them to the railway ministry. Speaking at a conference on road safety at IIT-Delhi, urban affairs secretary D S Mishra said the cost of Metrolite corridors would be 40% less than conventional Metro rail lines, which will make them financially viable.

“BJP in its poll manifesto has promised to introduce Metro rail in 50 cities. The traditional Metro network, which requires huge capital investment, may not be viable in many smaller cities.



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There won't be enough ridership as well. So, in those cases we can go for Metrolite network, which will be suitable at much less cost and will also act as feeder service from various parts of the city," said an official.

Currently, 657 km of Metro rail network is operational across cities and another 800 km is under construction in 27 cities. Sources said some Metro networks, such as in Nagpur, Kochi and Jaipur, are not getting good ri-

dership and even in some corridors of Delhi Metro, the number of passenger trips is low. They said Kochi Metro's annual loss was estimated to be around Rs 25 crore.

“The story could be similar in some other Metro networks that are run and managed by state governments. We need to find a way out to avoid such a situation. Metrolite system can address these concerns. Now, almost all cities are clamouring for Metro network,” the official said.