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Ropeway answer to transport ills in Kolkata?

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Kolkata: An engineer, who claims to have developed and patented a non-linear ropeway system for urban transportation, plans to highlight its effectiveness in a congested city like Kolkata on Friday. Conveyor and Ropeway Services Pvt Ltd, of which Shokhar Chakravarty is the managing director, has already built a prototype that runs along two angular deviations for about 250 metres beyond Bhasa in Joka. Chakravarty says that a 250-km network in the city is possible.

"Ropeways have a monopoly in cities in Europe and elsewhere that have winter sports. But there is no reason why they cannot be adopted in a city like Kolkata. We have named this 'Curvo', the world's first non-linear ropeway for a second-tier alternative urban transport system. The first-tier is vehic-

ular transport on the road, which is plagued by several ills such as pollution, accidents and the subsidies that the government has to pay. The best part of Curvo is that there are no hassles involved in construction. No major construction is involved and the towers can be erected during the night without any disruption to normal traffic. A 4-5 km stretch can be constructed in 12-15 months," Chakravarty said.

Curvo has the potential to carry 2,000-2,500 passengers per hour in a single line system and 4,000-4,500 passengers per hour in a double line. The average travel speed is 12.6 km per hour, which is much higher than that of the average vehicular speed of 7 km per hour in Kolkata. Chakravarty has estimated that if a 250-km network is created over Kolkata, the maximum power consumption is 8-9 MW. In



Curvo can travel at a speed of 12.6 km per hour by consuming 8-9 MW power

comparison, city vehicles require an equivalent of over 500 MW to cover the same distance with the same load of commuters.

"I have been developing the system for seven years now after

spending nearly 50 years in the ropeway field. I have given presentations in Thailand and been invited to Jamshedpur. The speciality of this system is that it can move in a non-linear direction. This means

that it can tackle curves. If it is constructed at Park Street, it can turn into Loudon Street and A.J.C Bose Road. The cars will be a distance of 50 metres from each other and arrive at the boarding stations at 23-25 second intervals. Every car will have a capacity of 8-10 people. The elevated stations will be situated every 750 metre," Chakravarty added.

He is first eyeing the 2-km long stretch between Sealdah and Lalbazar. The cost of construction will be about Rs 15 crore per km. The stretch can be completed at a cost of Rs 45 crore, which will be much cheaper than a Metro or a flyover. Most importantly, the system will be less polluting. There will be parking bays where the cars can move out when the load is less. The cars will be controlled centrally and this will eliminate the possibility of accidents, Chakravarty said.