

Metro coach-makers get 'Make in India' push

New Delhi: Now Indian rail coach manufacturers such as Bharat Earth Movers Ltd (BEML) cannot be barred from bidding to supply Metro Rail coaches in projects where the Centre provides any assistance, even if there is multi-lateral funding for these works. Moreover, the Centre has advised the Metro Rail companies to place "developmental order" of 10% to Indian propulsion equipment suppliers.

In its bid to push the Make in India mission, the housing and urban affairs ministry has issued fresh eligibility criteria for procurement of rolling

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stock (coaches), including the propulsion system.

Propulsion and control equipment make the trains move. Currently, there are three major players in this field — Mitsubishi, Bombardier and Alstom. Mitsubishi has the greatest share in this sector.

"Under the new norms, we have allowed the Metro Rail authorities to allow the rolling stock supplier to place up to

10% of orders to Indian propulsion equipment manufacturer. Developmental orders are placed to promote indigenous technology where the rules applicable can be relaxed and certain concessions may be granted," said a ministry official.

Sources said BEML, a PSU under the defence ministry, could not participate in two recent Metro rail projects because of certain criteria set by the multilateral funding agencies. "Now that won't be possible and every Metro Rail company which has got central assistance will have to follow the norms," the official added.

The Centre has also standardised the body width of

coaches — 2.9 meter and 3.2 meter — which all future Metro projects will have to follow. This will bring certainty for investors and ensure that there is no deviation. The policy also specifies that the operating speed of all Metro Rail will be 80 kmph and the design speed has to be 90 kmph. It also specifies that the train configuration will be of either three-car, six-car or nine-car formation unlike the current practice of four-car, six-car and eight-car.

"The standards for passenger safety have also been clearly defined such as every car must have two fire extinguishers," said the ministry official.