

Kerala's silverline project

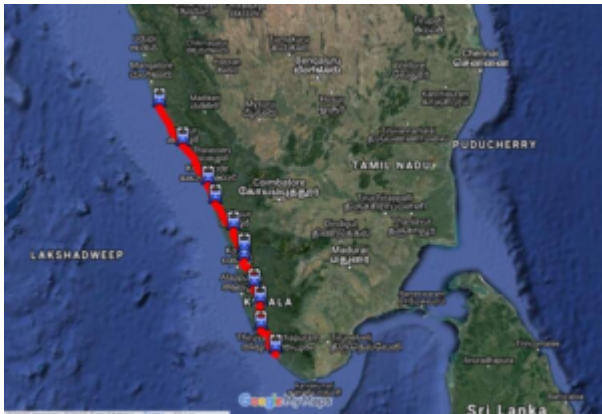
June 16, 2021

In news

Recently, Kerala government gave the green light to begin acquiring land for Silverline project

About Silverline project

- It is a semi high-speed railway project aimed at reducing travel time between the state's northern(Kasaragod) and southern ends(Thiruvananthapuram).



- Project Cost: Rs 63,940 crore
- The line is proposed to be 529.45 kms long, covering 11 districts through 11 stations.
- Once completed, one can travel from Kasaragod to Thiruvananthapuram in less than four hours on trains travelling at 200 km/hr.
- The current travel time on the existing Indian Railways network is 12 hours.
- The deadline for the project, being executed by the Kerala Rail Development Corporation Limited (KRDCL), is 2025.
- KRDCL, or K-Rail, is a joint venture between the Kerala government and the Union Ministry of Railways.

Other key features of the project

- The project will have trains of electric multiple unit (EMU) type with preferably nine cars and extendable to 12 cars each.
- A nine-car rake can seat a maximum of 675 passengers in business and standard class settings.
- The trains can run at a maximum speed of 220 kmph on standard gauge track, completing journeys in either direction in under four hours.
- Every 500 metres of the corridor, there will be under passages with provision of service roads.
- Cities covered under this rail line are Thiruvananthapuram(elevated station), Kollam, Chengannur, Kottayam, Ernakulam (Kakkanad)(elevated), Cochin Airport, Thrissur(elevated), Tirur, Kozhikode(underground station), Kannur and Kasaragod.

Need for the project

- The existing railway infrastructure in the state cannot meet the demands of the future.
- Most trains run with an average speed of 45 km/hr due to a lot of curves and bends on the existing stretch.
- The government claims the SilverLine project is the need of the hour as it can take a significant load of traffic off the existing railway stretch and make travel easier and faster for commuters

Opposition to the project

- Experts have called the project a 'white elephant' amid an array of concerns raised over it
- Environmentalists claim that it would impact the Western Ghats heavily because the project requires huge amounts of granite and loose soil.
- The project has received flak over apprehensions that it would destroy many paddy fields in the state

Significance of the project

The proposed railway line will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, help in expansion of Ro-Ro services, produce employment opportunities, integrate airports and IT corridors and faster development of cities it passes through.