

## KERALA'S SILVERLINE PROJECT



### Issue

Wide-scale protests are taking place in Kerala against SilverLine project, which envisages a semi-high speed train running between the state's northern and southern ends.

### Background

The project involves constructing a dedicated rail network where trains can run at the speed of 200 km/h. It is one of the biggest infrastructure plans being pushed by the current government.

### Details

- The length of the rail network is about 530 km and will link Thiruvananthapuram in the south to Kasaragod in the north.
- It will pass through 11 districts of the state. People will be able to travel from Kasaragod to Thiruvananthapuram in about four hours.

### Implementation

The project will be executed by the Kerala Rail Development Corporation Limited (KRDCL) or K-Rail, which is a joint venture between Kerala government and the Union Ministry of Railways.

### Need for the project

- Currently, the travelling time from north to south takes about 12 hours. The project will be able to cover the distance in 4 hours, saving time.
- The existing route is full of curves and bends and they will not be able to cater to future generation.

- The project will take off significant load of traffic from roads, thus making journey safer for commuters.
- The government has claimed that the project will reduce greenhouse emissions, integrate airports and IT corridors and help in faster development of cities.

### Features of project

- The project will have trains of electric multiple unit (EMU) type, having nine cars extendable to 12. It can seat a maximum of 675 passengers in business and standard class settings.
- Out of 11 stations, three stations will be elevated, one will be underground and the rest will be at grade.
- The project is expected to be executed using equity funds from the Kerala government, the Centre and loans from multilateral lending agencies.

### Protests

- Opposing parties say that the project will push the state further into debts. There are also fears of potential scams.
- The project is expected to displace more than 30,000 families. The route will cut through precious wetlands, paddy fields and hills, causing ecological harm.

### NOTES

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