

Electrification of railways at 41% of FY24 target

DHRUVAKSH SAHA

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The Ministry of Railways electrified 2,696 route kilometers (rkm) of broad gauge tracks in the first three quarters of the current financial year, which is 41.4 per cent of its full-year target of 6,500 rkm, as the ambitious drive to complete India's rail electrification enters its last leg, according to the ministry data.

While the Centre's deadline for complete electrification of the railway network was by the end of 2023, most stakeholders estimate that the full electrification target would be met in 2024, with broadly 4,000 rkm of the railway network remaining.

"There's no anomaly. Despite 2,696 rkm of electrification in nine months of the financial year, the calendar year figure for electrification is 6,577 kilometres in 2023, as the works usually pick up in the last quarter of the financial year. Railways is well-poised to meet its target," a government official said.

So far, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand,

Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Odisha, Puducherry, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand have been fully electrified. The network in these states and UTs aggregates to 24,383 rkm.

The railway network in Bihar, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab, West Bengal, Rajasthan, and Kerala is over 90 per cent and would be next in line for full electrification. There is elec-

trification work in progress on the remaining 4,048 rkm across zonal railways, and the budgetary outlay for electrification in 2023-24 was ₹8,070 crore.

Meanwhile, there has been no electrification in five states of Northeast India. Assam saw some progress as 39 per cent of the state's 2,500 rkm rail network has been electrified. This number stood at 28 per cent at the beginning of the financial year.

Officials said shortages of skilled labour and utilities become a challenge in certain areas, causing minor nags in electrification works.

They said the focus will be on these states since most high-density routes have already been electrified.

