

BOOSTER FOR ANDHRA PRADESH, BIHAR

Cabinet nod to ₹7,798 crore railway, space initiatives

DHRUVAKSH SAHA

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The Central government on Thursday gave its nod to two key railway projects worth ₹6,798 crore for Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, pinning its proposed capital Amaravati on the railways map. Interestingly, both these states are currently being governed by the alliance partners of the ruling BJP. But Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said that these are not political decisions.

The Union Cabinet, which cleared these two rail projects, also launched a venture capital (VC) fund of ₹1,000 crore for the space sector.

The two railway projects include a 57-kilometre long Amaravati rail link project, and doubling of the Narkatiaganj-Raxaul-Sitamarhi-Darbhangha and Sitamarhi-Muzaffarpur sections, covering a total of 256 km.

The new line between Errupalem and Namburu will pass through Amaravati and connect 168 villages through nine stations. The line will provide connectivity to 1.2 million people, a statement issued by the cabinet said.

The project will cost ₹2,245 crore and provide 1.9 million human days of employment, Vaishnaw said. The project will provide rail connectivity of Amaravati with Hyderabad, Chennai, and Kolkata, and provide accessibility to religious places such as Amaralingeswara Swamy Temple, Amaravati stupa, Dhyan Buddha statue and Undavalli Caves. Meanwhile in Bihar, the line doubling project for the Narkatiaganj-Raxaul-Sitamarhi-Darbhangha section and Sitamarhi-Muzaffarpur section spanning over 256 km will cost ₹4553 crore, providing enhanced connectivity for passengers and freight in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and the Northeast. The project runs close and parallel to the strategically important international border of Nepal and is vital for Indo-Nepal trade. The line connects to the inland container dopy (ICT) in Birgunj, Nepal.



The two projects covering 8 districts in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Bihar will increase the existing railway network by 313 kms, and will be completed in 5 years

More jobs, investment: Space industry welcomes ₹1K crore venture capital fund

SHINE JACOB

Chennai, 24 October

The space industry on Thursday welcomed the ₹1,000 crore venture capital fund for the sector, which is likely to benefit around 40 startups, saying that the move will attract investments from the private sector and generate employment.

The fund is planned for a time period of up to five years from the actual date of start of fund operations. The indicative range of investment proposed as part of the fund will be around ₹10-60 crore, contingent upon the stage of the company, its growth trajectory, and its potential impact on national space

capabilities.

A company in its growth stage will be getting between ₹10-30 crore, while the one in late growth stage will be getting around ₹30-60 crore. Based on the above investment range, the fund is expected to support approximately 40 startups. The average deployment amount could be ₹150-250 crore per year, depending on the investment opportunities and fund requirements.

"This initiative by the government will greatly strengthen the space ecosystem. Securing capital is vital for the expansion of space companies, and this fund is set to create a wave of private investments," said Pawan Kumar

Chandana, co-founder and chief executive officer (CEO) of private space technology company Skyroot Aerospace.

The proposed fund is expected to boost employment.

"We believe that this fund will not only be a key enabler for growth of Indian space startup ecosystem but will also inspire investors to seriously look at this sector as an investment," said A K Bhatt, director general, Indian Space Association (ISPA).

The size of India's space economy is around \$8.4 billion now and the government is targeting to take it to \$44 billion by 2033. At present, the space sector has around 250 registered startups, since sector reforms in 2020 resulted in increased private sector participation.

The range of investment will be around ₹10-60 crore based on stage of the firm