

# India gets first water Metro, Kerala its Vande Bharat

PM inaugurates ₹3,200-cr projects, says logistics being completely transformed

SHINE JACOB

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday inaugurated development projects worth more than ₹3,200 crore in Kerala, saying "India will develop faster" as the state progresses.

Modi flagged off India's first water metro that will connect 10 small islands around Kochi with boats running on hybrid power. He laid the foundation stone of various rail projects and a Digital Science Park in Thiruvananthapuram.

He flagged off Kerala's first Vande Bharat Express train connecting Thiruvananthapuram and Kasargod. Addressing a public gathering at Central Stadium in Thiruvananthapuram, Modi said that in the last nine years of his government, work on connectivity infrastructure has been unprecedented in terms of speed and scale. This year's Union budget proposed to spend more than ₹10 trillion on infrastructure.

"The public transport and logistics sector is being completely transformed in the country. We are moving towards the golden age of Indian railways", he said, adding that the average rail has increased five-fold after 2014 when his government came to power.

He inaugurated the railway



Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the flagging-off ceremony of Kerala's first Vande Bharat Express, at Thiruvananthapuram Central Station on Tuesday

PHOTO: PTI

electrification of the Dindigul-Palani-Palakkad section. He laid the foundation stone for various rail projects including the redevelopment of Thiruvananthapuram, Kozhikode, and Varkala Sivagiri railway stations.

The redevelopment of the three railway stations will make Kerala a multimodal transport hub. "Vande Bharat Express is the identity of aspirational India", said Modi as he highlighted the transformation of India's rail network.

"Kerala's first Vande Bharat train will link North Kerala with South Kerala. The train will ease travel to places of pilgrimage like Kollam, Kottayam, Ernakulam, Thrissur and Kannur," he said. Work has been begun to prepare the Thiruvananthapuram-Shoranur section for semi-high speed trains. Upon completion, the Prime Minister continued, it will become possible to run semi-high speed trains from Thiruvananthapuram to Mangaluru.

Modi elaborated that the effort is to provide Made in India solutions as per local needs with regard to infrastructure. He listed solutions like a semi-hybrid train, Regional Rapid Transport System, Ro-Ro ferry, and ropeway to illustrate situation-specific solutions for connectivity. He also underscored the indigenous origins of Made in India Vande Bharat and Metro coaches. He also mentioned projects like Metro-Lite and urban ropeways in smaller cities.

