

## PM DEDICATES RAILWAY PROJECTS WORTH OVER RS. 2900 CRORE IN ASARVA, AHMEDABAD

Relevant for: Indian Economy | Topic: Infrastructure: Railways

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation, two railway projects worth over Rs. 2900 crores at Asarva, Ahmedabad today.

Addressing the gathering, the Prime Minister remarked that today is a huge day for Gujarat's development and connectivity. He underlined that lakhs of people of Gujarat who used to be troubled due to the lack of broad gauge line in a large area are going to get a lot of relief from today. The Prime Minister expressed delight at getting the opportunity to dedicate the line after waiting for decades. The Prime Minister highlighted that the entire route has been rejuvenated and the meter gauge line from Asarwa to Udaipur via Himmatnagar has been converted into a broad gauge. He also informed that this part of Gujarat will now be connected directly with the neighbouring state of Rajasthan as well as the whole country. The gauge conversion work done between Lunidhar-Jetalsar will also ease rail connectivity in this area and trains originating from here will be able to go to any part of the country, he said.

"When the meter gauge line on a route is changed to broad gauge", the Prime Minister said, "it brings with it many new possibilities." With the conversion of the 300 km long rail line from Asarwa to Udaipur into broad gauge, the tribal areas of Gujarat and Rajasthan will be connected to Delhi and North India. The conversion of this railway line to broad gauge has also made an alternate route available for Ahmedabad and Delhi. Now, direct rail connectivity has also been established between the tourist places of Kutch and the tourist places of Udaipur. This will give a big boost to the tourist places of Kutch, Udaipur, Chittorgarh and Nathdwara. He noted that traders in the region will also get the benefit of connecting directly to big industrial centres like Delhi, Mumbai and Ahmedabad. "Especially, the tiles industry of Himatnagar will get a lot of help", he said. Similarly, with the conversion of Lunidhar-Jetalsar rail line to broad gauge, the Dhasa-Jetalsar section is now fully converted into broad gauge as well. This rail line passes through Botad, Amreli and Rajkot districts which till now have had limited rail connectivity. With the completion of this line, people of Bhavnagar and Amreli region will now get the benefit of direct connectivity to Somnath and Porbandar, the Prime Minister informed.

The Prime Minister noted that the route will reduce the distance between Bhavnagar-Veraval from about 470 kilometres to less than 290 kilometres, thereby reducing the travel time from twelve hours to just six and a half hours. Similarly, the distance between Bhavnagar-Porbandar has come down by about 200 kilometres, and the distance between Bhavnagar-Rajkot by about 30 kilometres, he said. The trains running on the broad gauge route will also accelerate the industrial development of Gujarat while making tourism accessible and connecting the areas which were cut off. "Dedicating this project today, on the day of Ekta Diwas, makes it more special", he said.

He emphasised "When the government of double engine works, its effect is not only double, but it is manifold. Here one and one together are not 2 but assume the power of 11." He continued, "With the double-engine government, the pace of work in Gujarat has not only increased, but it also got the strength to expand it." He noted that between 2009 and 2014, less than 125 kilometres of railway lines were doubled while between 2014 and 2022, more than five and a half hundred kilometres of railway lines have been doubled. Similarly, only about 60 km of track was electrified in Gujarat between 2009 and 2014. Whereas, between 2014 and 2022, more than 1700 km of track has been electrified.

Apart from improving on scale and speed, he said, improvement is taking place in quality, convenience, safety and cleanliness. He also highlighted the improvement in the condition of railway stations across the country. "The poor and middle class are being given the same environment, which was once accessible only to the well-to-do", he said, "Like Gandhinagar Station, Railway stations at Ahmedabad, Surat, Udhna, Sabarmati, Somnath and New Bhuj are being upgraded." Pointing out the achievements that have been made possible only because of the double-engine government, the Prime Minister gave the example of the new Vande Bharat Express service that was started between Gandhinagar and Mumbai. The Prime Minister informed that 12 Gati Shakti Cargo Terminals have also been planned to give a new dimension to the development of Western Railway. "The first Gati Shakti Multimodal Cargo Terminal has been commissioned in Vadodara circle. Soon the rest of the terminals will also be ready to provide their services", he added.

"After decades of independence", the Prime Minister said, "the rich-poor gap, the gulf between village and city, and unbalanced development have been a major challenge for the country. The government is working to solve this. The policy of 'Sabka Vikas' emphasises the provision of infrastructure and other facilities to the middle class and gives the poor the means to fight poverty. "Pucca houses, toilets, electricity, water, gas, free treatment and insurance facilities for the poor, are the hallmarks of good governance today", he said.

The Prime Minister noted a drastic change in the approach to the development of connectivity infrastructure in the country. Now in place of unplanned constructions, there is a coordinated approach to connecting facilities like rail, metro and buses. A synergy of routes and modes is being aimed for, he said. Underlining the industrial nature of Gujarat, the Prime Minister said that when the ports of Gujarat are empowered, it directly affects the economy of the whole country. "In the last 8 years, he said, the capacity of Gujarat's ports has almost doubled" he informed. The Prime Minister emphasised the continuous nature of the development process and said "Our motto is to build a developed Gujarat for a developed India."

Concluding the address, the Prime Minister hailed Sardar Patel on his birth anniversary and remarked that every Indian is proud of the achievements of India's first Home Minister. The Prime Minister criticised the absence of Sardar Patel's name and picture in some advertisements that appeared in some Gujarati papers, placed by the Rajasthan government. "Such an insult to Sardar Patel will never be tolerated, that too in the land of Gujarat.", Shri Modi said. The Prime Minister concluded, "the Railways, like Sardar Patel, connects India and this process moves forward constantly with pace and direction."

Union Minister of Railways, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister of State for Railways, Smt Darshana Jardosh, Members of Parliament, and state ministers were among those present on occasion.

## **Background**

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi dedicated two railway projects worth over Rs. 2900 crores at Asarva, Ahmedabad today. These projects include the Ahmedabad (Asarva)-Himmatnagar-Udaipur Gauge Converted Line and Lunidhar-Jetalsar Gauge Converted Line. The Prime Minister also flagged off new trains between Bhavnagar-Jetalsar and Asarva-Udaipur.

With a view to having a uni-gauge rail system across the country, Railways is converting the existing non-broad gauge railway lines to broad gauge. The projects being dedicated by the Prime Minister mark yet another step in this direction. The Ahmedabad(Asarva)-Himmatnagar-Udaipur Gauge Converted Line is around 300 Km long. It will improve connectivity and prove

beneficial for tourists, traders, manufacturing units and industries in the region, which will in turn boost employment opportunities and help in the socioeconomic development of the region. The 58 Km long Lunidhar-Jetalsar Gauge Converted Line will provide a shorter route for Pipavav Port and Bhavnagar from Veraval and Porbandar. The project will enhance freight carrying capacity on this section, thus decongesting the busy Kanalus - Rajkot - Viramgam route. It will now facilitate seamless connectivity to Gir sanctuary, Somnath temple, Diu and Girnar hills as well, thus boosting tourism in the region.

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