



Speech by PM at the dedication of Kochi Metro to the Nation

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The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, today inaugurated the Kochi Metro, and travelled briefly on the new metro line. He later addressed a large gathering at the function to dedicate Kochi Metro to the nation.

Following is the text of the Prime Minister's address:

I am happy to be part of the inauguration ceremony of Kochi Metro. I congratulate the people of Kochi on this proud moment.

Friends!

Kochi, the queen of the Arabian Sea, is an important spice trading centre. Today it is known as the commercial capital of Kerala. Kochi ranks first in the total number of international and domestic tourist arrivals in Kerala. Hence it is fitting that Kochi should have a Metro rail facility.

The city's population has been rising steadily, and is expected to reach twenty three lakhs by 2021. Therefore, a mass rapid transport system is essential to address the increasing pressure on urban infrastructure. This will also contribute to Kochi's economic growth.

Kochi Metro Rail Limited is a fifty - fifty Joint Venture of Government of India and Government of Kerala. The Union Government has so far released over two thousand crore rupees for Kochi Metro. The phase being inaugurated today will operate from Aluva to Palarivattom. It will cover 13.26 kilometres and eleven stations.

This metro project has several significant features.

It is the first metro project to be commissioned with a modern signalling system called the "Communication Based Train Control Signalling system".

The coaches reflect the "Make in India" vision. They have been built by Alstom of France, at their factory near Chennai, and have an Indian component of around seventy percent.

The Kochi metro integrates the city's entire public transportation network into a single system. This system will have a common time-table, common ticketing and centralised 'command and control'. It also focuses on improving last mile connectivity and non-motorised transportation systems in the inner city.

The Kochi Metro has also pioneered an innovative PPP model for ticketing Indian banks and financial institutions are being invited through a bid process to invest in an Automated Fare Collection system. The selected bank will co-brand the Kochi Metro Fare Card and App with the bank's name.

I am informed that this Kochi-1 Card is a multi-purpose pre-paid contact-less RuPay card which can be used to travel in the metro and also like a normal debit card. Kochi will be one of the few cities in the world and the first in India to have a modern open-loop Smart Card, which can be used with other modes of transport like buses, taxis and autos as well.

I am also informed that the Kochi-1 Mobile app has been developed with a long term vision. The mobile App has an Electronic-wallet integrated to it, which is linked to the Kochi-1 Card. Initially, it will enable citizens of Kochi to avail of metro services. In future, it will fulfil all their travel related requirements, regular payment needs and provide city and tourist information. Thus, it is a good example of an e-Governance digital platform. Another noteworthy aspect of this project is that nearly one thousand women and twenty-three transgenders are being selected to work in the Kochi Metro Rail System.

The project is also an example of environment friendly development. It plans to meet nearly twenty five percent of the entire energy requirements from renewable sources, particularly solar energy. The long-term plan is to become a zero-carbon emitting urban transit system. Every sixth pillar of the metro system will have a covered vertical garden, which will substantially use urban solid waste.

It is heartening to note that all stations as well as the Operation Control Centre of Kochi Metro have achieved platinum rating which is the highest certification level given by the Indian Green Building Council.

Friends!

Over the last three years, my Government has placed special focus on overall infrastructure development of the nation. Railways, roads, power have been our priority areas. In PRAGATI meetings, I have personally reviewed nearly 175 projects worth more than eight lakh crore rupees. We have resolved bottlenecks and significantly improved the average rate of implementation in these sectors. Now, we are also focusing on next generation infrastructure, which includes logistics, digital and gas.

A number of initiatives have been taken by us to enhance public transport particularly in the cities. Foreign investment has been invited in this sector. Fifty cities in India are ready to implement metro rail projects.

The economic and social benefits of metro rail systems are well-known. We have speeded up policy formulation in this sector. Recently, the Government of India has standardized the specifications for rolling stock and signalling systems of metro rail. This will encourage manufacturers to set-up manufacturing facilities in India with a long-term perspective. In line with the "Make in India" vision, efforts are being made to promote domestic manufacture of metro rolling stock.

Friends!

There is need to bring about a paradigm shift in urban planning, by adopting a people-centric approach, and integrating land-use and transport.

Towards this end, the Government of India issued a National Transit Oriented Development Policy in April 2017. This policy seeks to transform cities, from being transit dependent to being transit oriented. It aims to create compact walkable communities and bring public transport closer to transit.

I compliment the Union Ministry of Urban Development led by Venkaiah ji for having formulated a Value Capture Finance Policy Framework. This provides a mechanism to capture the increased land value.

Let me conclude by congratulating the citizens of Kochi, the Kochi Metro Rail Corporation and the Chief Minister of Kerala for achieving this important milestone. Kochi was selected as a Smart City in Round One of the challenge process in January 2016. I hope it will do even better in the days to come.

Thank You.

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