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Launch of 2nd version of Vande Bharat trains by Aug: Vaishnaw

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POINTING OUT that the two Vande Bharat trains launched in 2019 have travelled 14 lakh kilometres and "proven" themselves, Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw Tuesday said the Indian Railways will launch an upgraded second version of the semi-high-speed trains in August 2022.

Interacting with media persons at the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) at Gandhinagar, the minister said, "The plan for Vande Bharat trains were given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2017 and the first two trains started operating in 2019. So far, both the trains have travelled 14 lakh kilometres... Last year, 75 more trains have been approved that are under production."

The Indian Railways operates Vande Bharat Express from New Delhi to Varanasi and from New Delhi to Shri Mata Vaishnodevi Katra.

Adding that the second and third versions of Vande Bharat trains will use better technology, Vaishnaw said the Vande Bharat



**Union
Railway
Minister
Ashwini
Vaishnaw**

trains currently run at 160 kilometres per hour and the second version will touch 180 kilometres per hour and the third version of the train will travel at 220 kilometres per hour.

"We will start the roll out of Vande Bharat-2 train or the second version of the trains in August 2022," he said adding that five-six trains will be rolled out every month after the launch. "The second version of Vande Bharat will have air springs (between the coach and the wheels) and will improve the ride quality manifold," Vaishnaw added.

The minister said once the first batch of 75 Vande Bharat trains are launched, the Indian Railways will launch more. "Of the proposed 400 trains, about 250 will be the second version of Vande Bharat trains and then the third version will introduced," he added.

The Railway minister who was at EDII for an interaction on

start-ups said Vande Bharat trains will be operated on new routes and in some places, it will replace existing trains. "Bullet train takes 55 seconds to reach from 0-100 kilometers per hour. A similar technology has been used in these trains and it has been designed in India. It takes only 54 seconds to reach from 0-100 kms per hour. It has a good acceleration. Its shock absorbers are also very good," he added.

Bullet train project

Talking about the bullet train project, Vaishnaw said the project will pick up speed with a new government in Maharashtra. "The earlier government in Maharashtra was not in favour of this project. But now that people have changed the government, the progress will happen," he added.

"Good progress is being made in the bullet train project. So far, pillars on 70 kilometres of the route on Vapi-Ahmedabad section, have been built. The work on this section began first, as we got the land. Foundations for pillars have been laid on 160 kilometres in this section," he said work on the 8-9 bridges and stations were also under way.

"The first bullet train section from Surat to Billimora is targeted to become operation by 2026. The first bullet train section made by China was 113 kilometres between Beijing and Tianjing. Our section between Ahmedabad and Vapi is 352 kilometres," he said.

Station redevelopment

The minister said a masterplan for developing 370 stations have been made and tenders for 45 stations have been issued. He said the learnings from the pilot projects for station redevelopment at Gandhinagar, Bhopal and Bengaluru have been incorporated into new redevelopment. Surat, Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Navsari, Rajkot, Vapi, Bharuch, Bilimora, Anand, Nadiad, Ankleshwar, Udhana, Gandhidham, Palanpur, Jamnagar and New Bhuj will be the 16 stations that will be redeveloped in Gujarat. Apart from this, a new station building has been constructed at Vadnagar station and Chhaya-puri is being developed as a new satellite station near Vadodara.

The railway minister also said that tenders for installing ingenious anti-collision device "Kavach" have been issued for 3,000 kilometres of railway tracks.