

5. Silver Line Railway Project

Prelims Level: Infrastructure

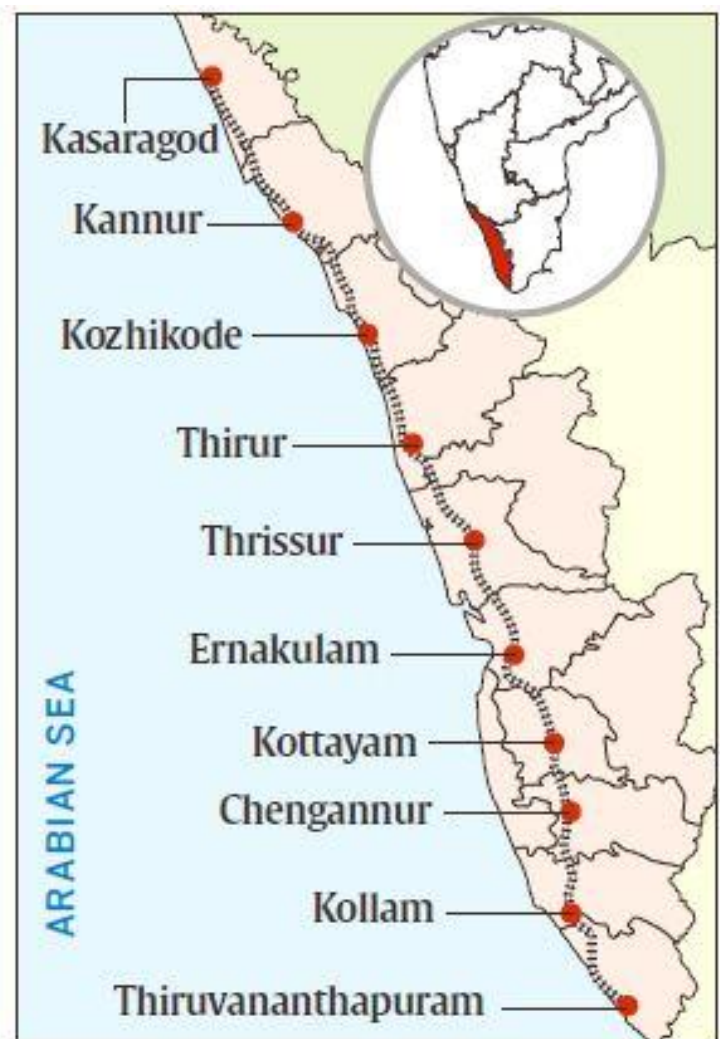
Mains Level: GS-III Infrastructure

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Railways granted in-principle approval for the ‘Silver Line’ project, a proposal of the Kerala government that involves laying of semi high-speed trains between the two corners of the state of Kerala.

The Silver Line project:

- The Silver Line project aims to connect major districts and towns with semi high-speed trains that will run on their own tracks.
- The 532-km corridor is projected to be built at a cost of Rs 56,443 crore. Trains would complete the journey at four hours instead of 12, with a maximum speed of 200 km/h.
- The corridor will be built away from the existing line between Thiruvananthapuram and Thrissur.
- The semi high-speed trains will traverse through 11 of the state’s 14 districts, Alappuzha, Wayanad and Idukki being the exceptions.
- There are also plans to connect the corridor with the international airports at Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram. The project is scheduled to be commissioned by 2024.



Significance:

- Kerala’s road networks are clogged and experience dense traffic during peak hours.
- According to a data, less than 10% of the state’s roads handle nearly 80% of the traffic.

- This also gives rise to accidents and casualties; in 2018, Kerala recorded 4,259 deaths and 31,687 grievous injuries.
- Experts have been demanding faster transportation options including railways and waterways
- The current railway network is congested with a large number of trains, level crossings and sharp curves.
- The project will result in direct and indirect employment opportunities for 50,000 people, and the project once completed would create direct employment for at least 11,000 people.

Implementation:

- The Kerala Rail Development Corporation (K-Rail), a joint venture between the Ministry of Railways and the Kerala government to execute projects on a cost-sharing basis, will be the nodal agency.
- The government is believed to be looking at external funding agencies.
- An initial investment is likely to be made by K-Rail for acquiring land. A Detailed Project Report (DPR) will be commissioned soon.

