

# Rly Ministry, Karnataka ink pact for suburban railway system

New trains flagged off from Bengaluru to Ramanagaram and Shivamogga

## OUR BUREAU

Bengaluru, January 16

The Karnataka government and the Railways Ministry have signed a memorandum of understanding for a suburban railway system in Bengaluru to address the city's traffic congestion.

The MoU was released by Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah at a function here on Monday.

A special company would be set up for the project and it will be financed in an innovative way, Prabhu said.

## New trains flagged off

Speaking after flagging off two new trains - one a suburban train that connected Ramanagaram and the other an ex-

press train between Bengaluru and Shivamogga - he said the Railways was introducing three pairs of new local trains connecting Bengaluru to Ramanagaram, IT Hub of Whitefield and Kuppam across the border in Andhra Pradesh.

Railways had increased yearly allocation to Karnataka from ₹500 to ₹2,700 crore a year. Doubling of tracks to the extent of 202 km has been commissioned. It had commissioned 92 km of new lines while Bengaluru-Mysuru track-doubling was nearly complete and will be commissioned before March 31 this year, he said.

"Railways will be doubling electrification in the coming five years and we plan to make around 90 per cent of the railway lines electrified, which



Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Union Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu at the function to flag off new train services from Bengaluru to Ramanagaram and Shivamogga, in Bengaluru on Monday **K MURALI KUMAR**

would go hand in hand with the developmental strategies and environmental policies," he said.

## e-catering facility

Later, addressing the 31st edition of Vicharmanthan hosted

in Kristu Jayanti College here, Prabhu said, "The pressure of modernisation has increased, but resources are not rightly channelled. The ministry is expecting funds from the Finance Ministry to complete key projects."

Railways is planning to implement e-catering facility. "This will be a great revolution in the department of Railways by providing desired cuisines for the passengers regardless of regional differences. The initiative also provides financial stability to local self-help groups (SHGs), enabling them to sell their products in a wider market," Prabhu said.

## Bangalore Metro Phase II

Earlier, Union Minister for Statistics and Programme Implementation D V Sadananda Gowda held review of implementation of various programmes, funded by the Centre.

Gowda said, "The Phase I of Metro train service is aimed at easing the traffic congestion in the city. It will be ready by April this year and the Phase II to be taken up at an estimated cost of ₹26,000 crore and will be completed by 2020.