

Morocco launches USD 10.3 billion rail expansion ahead of 2030 world cup

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Dhaka: Morocco has announced a USD 10.3 billion rail expansion project to upgrade its national transport infrastructure ahead of the 2030 FIFA World Cup, which it will co-host with Spain and Portugal. Officially launched on April 24, the plan includes new intercity, urban, and high-speed train lines.

A major part of the expansion is a new high-speed rail line linking Kenitra on the Atlantic coast to Marrakesh, with stops in Rabat and Casablanca. The 430-kilometer route will allow trains to travel at speeds of up to 350 kilometers per hour. This will reduce the travel time from Marrakesh to Tangier to just 2 hours and 40 minutes, while the trip from Rabat to Casablanca's main airport will take only 35 minutes. The high-speed line alone is expected to cost USD 5.7 billion and should be operational by 2030.

To support the expansion, Morocco's state rail operator, ONCF, has signed deals to acquire 168 trains from France, Spain, and South Korea at a cost of USD 3.1 billion. French manufacturer Alstom will supply 18 Avelia Horizon double-decker high-speed trains, worth approximately USD 833 million, each capable of carrying 640 passengers at speeds up to 320 kilometers per hour.

ONCF also plans to double the number of cities served by rail to 43 by 2040, ensuring 87% of Morocco's population has access to train service. The project aims to prepare for the World Cup and support a sustainable, modern transport system for the future.

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