Speech of Shri Lalu Prasad
Introducing the Railway Budget
for 2005-06, on 26th February 2005.

Mr. Speaker,

1. Sir, I rise to present the Budget Estimates for 2005-06 for the Indian Railways. I am presenting this budget at a point in time when the Indian economy reflects a vibrant growth. The Tenth Plan envisages an economic growth of eight per cent. This requires significant investment in infrastructure, of which railways are important and integral part, through larger public and private investment. This also needs greater efficiency in these sectors and sound fiscal management for financial viability.

2. Indian Railways have a critical role in ensuring the continued economic development of the country. We have drawn up an ambitious plan for meeting the increasing and emerging demands of the economy through the provision of world-class infrastructure. We will work not only towards streamlining the passenger services further and ensuring a palpable improvement in the quality of passenger services but also initiate a gamut of commercial, operational and investment – oriented initiatives in the freight sector thereby doing everything possible to improve Railways' share in the transport sector. I shall outline these policy decisions in the course of my speech.

Review of Physical and Financial Performance in 2004-05

3. Sir, when I presented the first railway budget of the United Progressive Alliance Government, the so called intelligentsia had criticized it as a populist one since I had not increased railway fares and freight. I have immense pleasure in reporting to this August House that with the untiring efforts of lakhs of railway employees, the physical as well as financial performance of Railways in the first nine months of the current financial year has been excellent, thereby belying this criticism. On the freight front Indian Railways have transported 438.36 million tonnes which is 31.21 million tonnes more than the traffic lifted during the corresponding period of the last year. This implies a growth of 7.67 per cent over last year. Keeping this trend in mind, the revised target for loading has been raised from 580 million tonnes to 600 million tonnes and the revised freight earnings have also been increased from Rs 28,745 cr. to Rs 30,450 cr. For many decades the railways share of the freight market has been progressively reducing. Sir, it is a matter of pride for every railwayperson that this year, by registering a freight growth that surpasses the growth of economy, not only have the railways regained some market share, but will also be surpassing the Tenth Plan target of 396 billion tonne kilometres of the terminal year 2006-07 in this year itself, that is two years ahead of target. Sir, the current year's expected incremental freight loading of 43 mt is the highest achieved so far. Originating passenger traffic has also registered a growth of around six percent as compared to the budget target of 3%. The total earnings to end of December 04, which stand at Rs.33,900 cr., represent an 8.3 percent growth over the last year as against a growth of 4.1% registered in the previous financial year. The Revised Estimates have been framed keeping this trend in mind. Total earnings of Revised Estimates at Rs 46,635 cr are Rs 1,838 cr higher as compared to Budget Estimates.

4. Concerted efforts of the Ministry of Railways have also resulted in a two-fold increase in realisation of outstanding dues over the previous year. With the anticipated clearance of Rs 150 cr, the budgeted gross traffic receipts of Rs 44,902 cr will increase to Rs 46,785 cr.

5. The Ordinary Working Expenses are likely to increase by Rs 400 cr., mainly due to the steep post budgetary increase in fuel prices and the Revised Estimates for these are placed at Rs. 33,260 cr as against Rs. 32,860 cr in the Budget Estimates.

6. While the gross traffic receipts are anticipated to increase by Rs. 1883 cr over the Budget Estimates, the working expenses are expected to grow by only Rs. 400 cr, resulting in a significant increase in the internal generation during the current fiscal. With this the ratio of the ordinary working expenses and pension to the gross traffic receipts, i.e., "Working Ratio", is expected to be around 85%. Despite the appropriation to Depreciation Reserve Fund being Rs. 395 cr higher than budgeted, the Operating Ratio is expected to be 91.2% against the budgeted 92.6%.

7. Hon'ble members have been expressing concern about depleting balances in the Railway funds. It is a matter of satisfaction that despite withdrawals in the current year being higher compared to previous years, the fund balances are expected to close with a healthy figure of Rs 6963 cr.

8. In comparison with earlier years our physical and financial performance has been praiseworthy. However, we will not remain content with this.

"Uthna hai aur bhi upar, hai uchaiana pukartin
Hai apar kshmtayein,aashaein tumhe nihartin"

Several policy initiatives which I shall spell out in the course of my speech, have been taken with a view to ensuring that the economy and populace are able to reap the full benefits of Railways' vast potential.

Freight Business Initiatives

9. Sir, policy decisions on several commercial, operating and investment related aspects have been taken with a view to bringing about an increase in the average speed of freight trains and reduction of detention to rolling stock at terminals which I would like to mention briefly.

Strategy to Improve Wagon Availability and Wagon Utilization

10. Sir, despite no significant augmentation in the number of wagons last year, considerable increase in loading has been possible due to improvements in the wagon turn round. The latter is expected to improve from seven last year to about six in year 2004-05. By taking up measures for improvements in this area on a war footing it is expected to bring the wagon turn round down to five days in the near future.

11. The Preferential Tariff Schedule for supply of wagons has been rationalised and simplified. Highest priority "A" will be accorded to the Military traffic for Defence movement. Priority "B" shall be accorded to the emergency relief material for natural calamities and traffic sponsored by the Central Government agencies. Approved programmed traffic shall be accorded "C" priority. All other commodities will be moved under priority "D". In every category a higher priority within the same class of priority shall be accorded to the traffic offered by the customers adopting Engine-on-Load scheme, Wagon Investment Scheme or full rake sidings with mechanized round-the-clock working.

12. In order to ensure un-interrupted movement of goods trains and to have better turn round of wagons, it is proposed to electrify diesel sidings located on electrified sections at Railways' cost, where heavy detentions occur and a prescribed number of rakes is handled per month.

Engine-on-Load

13. As the House is aware, "Engine-on-Load" (EOL) scheme, was announced in the last Budget, wherein the train engine waits during loading and unloading operations to ensure faster release and better availability of wagons. After consultation with customers, the terms and conditions have been further liberalized. The permissible free time for loading is being increased from three hours to four hours for bulk commodities and from five hours to six hours for bagged consignments. It has also been decided to give a cash incentive by way of encashment of the credit hours available at the end of every quarter to be adjusted as a rebate in the freight payable in the following quarter. It has been decided that higher preference, within the same class of priority, will be accorded in supply of rakes to the EOL customers. The EOL scheme is also being extended to selected goods sheds and for customers not having their own private sidings.

Terminal Incentive Scheme

14. It is proposed to introduce a cash incentive scheme for such freight customers who help the railways in reducing the terminal detention through investments in infrastructure for mechanized loading and unloading, round-the-clock working and improvements in yard lay out in their sidings. The "Terminal Incentive Scheme" shall be formulated in consultation with industry and after getting all related aspects examined by a professional agency.

15. To bring about a qualitative improvement in freight train examination and wagons maintenance practices, infrastructural facilities will be upgraded at freight train examination centres, particularly those for close circuit rakes. In the coming year 20 such examination centres will be upgraded. With this, detentions during examination of freight trains will be reduced, quality of train examinations will be improved and safety will be enhanced. Substantially longer intervals will be provided between two successive train examinations by providing extended run of freight trains after every examination and for most close circuit rakes there will be no need for re-examination upto 6000 kms.

16. It is proposed to rationalise the rules relating to demurrage and wharfage and the time given for loading and unloading. Accordingly, it has been decided that all goods sheds and sidings shall have uniform working hours and business hours. Customers are being encouraged to undertake loading and unloading operations through mechanized handling equipment and adopt round-the-clock working. As an incentive, only fifty percent of the actual time taken for loading or unloading operation from 22.00 hours to 06.00 hours will be reckoned for calculation of free time for the purpose of demurrage.

17. Unloading from wagons is sometimes held up due to delayed removal of consignments from an earlier rake lying on the ground. In order to encourage expeditious removal of the goods, it has been decided that a grace period of two hours beyond the prescribed free time for unloading of wagons shall be permitted if the entire consignment from the rake is removed from the goods sheds within the extended free time.

Electronic Payment Gateway

18. I am happy to advise that the pilot project for setting up Electronic Payment Gateway for freight, which I had proposed during the last Railway Budget, has been implemented for Badarpur Thermal Power

Station in January' 2005 and a clearance of Rs. 110 crores has been effected from their outstanding dues. This facility will be extended to all major customers during the coming years, who opt for the same.

Public - Private Partnership

19. Several public-private partnership initiatives are being taken to garner resources through non-traditional methods for the modernization and development of the railways and to provide enhanced facilities for users. Prominent amongst these are private sidings, commercial utilization of surplus railway land through construction of modern railway stations with provision of additional passenger amenities and logistics parks under the aegis of Rail Land Development Authority, initiatives related to parcel, utilization of optic fibre cable network of RailTel, computerized train enquiry system and wagon investment scheme, which will be covered in the course of my speech.

Sidings

20. In order to enhance the rail share in transportation, it is necessary that freight customers are encouraged to develop their private sidings. It is proposed that the Railways shall share the cost of a new railway siding if the industry comes up with a long-term commitment of traffic; say for 10 years or more. Under this arrangement, the cost of the removable super structure including the track, sleepers, fastening etc. and the overhead electric equipment shall be borne by the railways. The capital cost of all traffic facilities such as 'Y' connection, additional lines at the serving station, crossing stations, patch doubling of the section etc. shall be fully borne by the railways. The siding owners will be required to bear the cost of the land, earthwork and the sub structure of the track.

21. It has further been decided that in all private sidings other than Engine on load only, barring the cost of one commercial staff per shift, the Railways would bear the cost of all other Railway staff. The cost of all staff at engine on load sidings will be borne by the Railways.

Rail Land Development Authority (RLDA)

22. To ensure the commercial utilisation of surplus railway land and air space I had, during the last Parliament session, presented a Railway (Amendment) Bill, 2004 in the Rajya Sabha, for setting up of RLDA. This authority will, through public-private participation, develop surplus land adjoining railway stations and goods sheds for constructing warehouses and logistics parks. It would also generate additional resources for the development of railways. Sir, in the coming years we propose, with the help of this Authority, to develop metro stations into world class modern stations and extend passenger amenities through construction of food plazas, shopping malls, etc. on vacant land. In the year 2005-06, all efforts will be made to complete the process relating to sanction of an action plan for converting New Delhi Railway Station into such a modern world class station.

Integrated Warehouse Complexes

23. Indian Railways have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC) who will develop integrated warehouse complexes at 22 locations. A scheme for development of integrated warehouse complex by private sector has also been approved with a view to encourage public-private partnerships as per this model. It will provide a single window service to the customers for providing value added service of forwarding, handling, warehousing and road bridging.

RailTel Corporation of India Limited

24. Sir, the optic fibre network of RailTel Corporation has now grown to 26,000 route kilometres (rkms) and is likely to reach 40,000 rkms by 2008. During the current financial year RailTel has completed connectivity of four metros and four mini metros. This apart, the present network already provides connectivity to 180 important cities and 1750 other railway stations. The telecommunication and safety requirements of railways are being satisfactorily met by this network. Once the ongoing process of upgrading the capacity of their OFC network from STM-4 to STM-16 over 23,000 rkms is completed in June 2005, RailTel's revenue earning capability will increase beyond expectations. RailTel will make every effort to exploit this vast network through public private partnership by means of joint venture, either through leasing or channel partner and provide various broadband services such as internet, voice telephony on internet, cable TV, national long distance telephony in urban as well as rural areas.

Container Traffic

25. With the globalization of the Indian economy and spurt in imports and exports, the container traffic is expected to grow exponentially. It has been assessed that the growth will be of the order of 15%. In order to meet the growing demand for container trains, organizations other than Container Corporation of India will also be considered for movement of container traffic.

26. Capacity constraints on the existing routes necessitate introduction of double stack container freight trains. It is proposed to introduce double stack container trains during the next two years on one of the identified routes connecting North India with Gujarat ports, based on cost economics.

Parcel Business – Initiatives

27. In order to provide value added services for transportation of parcels, railways have been leasing the parcel space in the front SLR coaches of passenger carrying trains by inviting bids through open tenders. It is proposed to introduce additional leasing of one of the two compartments in the rear SLR coaches of certain nominated Mail/Express trains also to attract more traffic. It is also proposed to lease out the vacant compartment of guard in the front SLR coach to courier services for carriage of small packages.

28. Currently the parcel space in SLRs of many Mail/Express and passenger trains is underutilized and in some trains it is even below fifty percent. In order to attract traffic in such trains short-term lease for a period of one year shall be introduced. The reserve price for such leasing shall also be lower, keeping in view the past utilization of parcel space by such trains. Leasing of parcel space by ordinary passenger trains shall also be permitted for intermediate stations, if there is adequate demand between different pairs of stations covered by the train.

Passenger Business – Initiatives And Amenities

29. In the ensuing year I propose a number of steps for providing new, modern and improved facilities to the passengers. Some of these are detailed below:

Computerized Train Enquiry System

30. Sir, passengers often complain that telephone lines pertaining to railway enquiry remain always busy. An attempt has, therefore, been made to expand its reach up to village level by modernizing the train enquiry system and opening call centres at Patna. Under this initiative, people from any corner of Bihar can enquire about arrival and departure of trains, reservation status, fare, concessions, etc., by dialling a universal telephone number 139 at local call rates. To ensure that the lines do not remain busy, depending upon the need, 200 to 500 lines are used in a call centre so that a large number of people can access the facility of enquiry simultaneously. Considering the unprecedented success of this initiative, I am happy to inform the House that I have decided to extend this facility throughout the country by the end of 2005-06 so that not only urban but rural people are also able to get the desired information instantly by dialling a universal number 139 at local call rates.

Round the Clock Internet Booking.

31. The facility of booking tickets through Internet, which was started for cell-phones in the current year will soon be available on landline phones also. Presently booking of rail tickets on the Internet is restricted from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. With effect from 15th March 2005 this facility will be available from 4.00 a.m. to 11.30 p.m. without a break.

Reservation status in advance

32. At present, waitlisted passengers do not know their status till the preparation of chart, which is normally done only about four hours before train departure. This time is considered too short for a person to finalise his journey plans. Therefore, continuous updation of the waiting list will now be made possible through suitable modifications in the passenger reservation system.

Display of vacant berth position

33. Along with the reservation chart, it is proposed to display vacancy position charts in all reserved coaches and on the platform so that waitlisted passengers can have information about vacant berths in various legs of journeys which will further enable transparency in their allotment. Wherever possible, this data would be linked to the current booking counters, so that vacant berths can be released.

Expansion of IT for customer satisfaction

34. Sir, it is proposed to launch a pilot scheme for Mumbai suburban passengers to renew their season tickets on Internet and have it home-delivered on the lines of Internet ticketing for reserved category. This will provide relief for a large number of season ticket holders and ease congestion at the booking counters.

35. The Passenger Reservation System (PRS) has already been installed at 1,163 locations all over the country. Another 152 locations have been sanctioned and are at various stages of completion. While the majority of District Headquarters have been provided with PRS facilities, it is proposed to cover the remaining District Headquarters, 100 in number, with these facilities within the next two years. 45 such

locations will be taken up in 2005-06 subject to provision of space by the district authorities as per extant policy.

36. The Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS) has already been provided at 108 locations in 14 Zonal Railways. A total of 120 locations are likely to be covered by the end of the financial year. It will be further expanded by over 300 locations during the year 2005-06.

It Steps Oriented Towards Mis

37. Indian Railways will move towards greater deployment of information technology so as to improve the process of planning, monitoring and decision making, reduce operating expense through a more efficient utilisation of rolling stock and to enhance the public image of the railways. I would like to briefly mention some of the new initiatives being taken.

38. It is proposed to develop a Management Information System through a data warehouse developed from the Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS), Passenger Reservation System (PRS), and Freight Operations Information System (FOIS) on the Indian Railways. The proposed data warehouse will significantly boost the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning, control and monitoring processes.

39. At present control over movement of trains is carried out through manual charting by the staff in most of the divisional control offices. Computerization of control charting will be taken up on Indian Railways during 2005-06. This will not only enable charting to be carried out with greater ease but will also result in more effective control over movement. Simultaneously, useful information on real time basis shall be made available to passengers on line through the NTES and call centres. The Control Charting system would be implemented on 15 divisions in the coming year.

40. A computerized Crew Management System is already running in a few divisions on different railways. On the basis of the experience gained from these, it is proposed to develop and implement a unified crew management system. This system will streamline the management of train crews, optimising manning of trains, and providing running staff with rational working hours.

41. COIS Punctuality Module is already available at most of the Divisional and Zonal Headquarters i.e. 80 locations approximately. The timetable module of COIS is under development and a central timetable date base has been built up. This will be web-enabled during the year 2005-06.

42. During the year 2005-06, computerization of Railway Claims Tribunals, Goods Refund Offices and Subsidiary Claim Offices will be undertaken on similar lines as those of Claim Offices. Computerisation of goods refund offices will provide facility of online registration of goods refund cases and of checking the status of these cases from the Railways. It is anticipated that the web-enabled Claims Management System would help in reducing the average time taken for claim settlement.

Integrated Railway Modernisation Plan (IRMP)

43. Sir, with above new initiatives and by formulating an Integrated Railway Modernization Plan we have a dream of making the Indian Railways as the best Railway system in the world.

"Sirf hungama khara karna mera maksad nahin,

Meri koshish hai ki ye surat badalni chahiye"

44. With a view to develop Indian Railways as a world class railway, an Integrated Railways Modernisation Plan spanning five years upto 2010 has been formulated. Under this plan, in the passenger segment, running of 150 kmph trains on New Delhi- Howrah and New Delhi-Chennai routes is envisaged. The freight business segment envisages running of freight trains at 100 kmph on the golden quadrilateral and its diagonals, introduction of higher axle load, double stack containers and Roll-on-Roll-Off wagons on the identified routes, etc.

45. The tare weight of the wagons currently being used limits the freight loading of the Railways. With a view to increasing the loading capacity of each wagon by four tonnes, it is proposed to introduce lightweight, corrosion resistant aluminium wagons during the period of the modernisation plan.

46. Other modernisation initiatives also include track modernisation and its maintenance practices, modernisation of Bridge Management System, signalling and telecommunication system, mechanical and electrical system and the Disaster Management System. The total expenditure envisaged for execution of the identified items in the IRMP is about Rs. 24,000 crore.

Accounting Initiatives

47. The existing Accounting system on Indian Railways is time tested and provides a reasonable base for capture of data and production of financial statements in accordance with reporting requirements of Government. However, recent trends witnessed worldwide lay stress on uniform accounting standards and deployment of information technology assisted accounting system with greater transparency in financial

reporting of the organization. The Railways have accordingly set in motion an Accounting Reforms process to meet the emerging business needs.

48. In the Railway accounting system certain accounting heads are maintained to record transactions on accrual basis so as to establish a link between commercial accounts and government accounts. Also, revenue and capital expenses are classified under different heads. However, the total amount of lease charges paid to Indian Railway Finance Corporation for rolling stock leased by it is treated as a revenue expenditure whereas this amount includes both interest and principal repayment components, which are in the nature of revenue and capital expenditure, respectively. Therefore, it is proposed to modify this accounting system, following due procedures, in such a way that the true nature of such transactions and contribution of such assets to railway revenues can be ascertained and the accounting is in line with the generally accepted and standard accounting practices followed for lease finance.

49. Besides, there is a need to go into the capital structure of the Railways particularly with reference to the contribution to Depreciation Reserve Fund on a scientific basis, identification of unproductive and redundant capital assets and the need for a policy of amortization. I have, therefore, directed the Ministry to draw up a suitable action plan so as to rationalize the capital structure of the Indian Railways.

50. In the context of the ongoing accounting reforms and the contemplated capital restructuring initiatives, it is proposed to establish a Chair for studies in railway finance at one of the Indian Institutes of Management. This will be a fitting commemoration of the platinum jubilee celebrations of the Indian Railway Accounts Service.

Actuarial Assessment of Pension Liability on Indian Railways

51. Sir, Indian Railways have nearly 12 lakh pensioners, spread all over India, with expenditure on pension touching Rs. 7,000 cr per annum. Liability on this account is increasing progressively. The appropriation to Pension Fund, which has been created for meeting pension requirements, should ideally be made on the basis of actuarial assessment. The last such assessment for the Central Government employees including Railways took place in 1974. It is proposed to have an actuarial assessment done for railway pensioners to assess the future liability on account of pensionary charges on railways. This will help in managing this liability in a better way. Accordingly, it is proposed to get this study done through a professional agency.

Transparency in Purchase and Sale

52. Sir, while presenting the last year's Railway Budget I had announced that transparency would be brought in the auction of scrap by curbing the activities of mafia elements effectively. Every year the Railways make purchases of material worth thousands of crores of rupees. In certain cases the material cannot be supplied to the Railways at fair prices for want of limited number of approved suppliers. There have been complaints of cartel formation in the recent years, specially in tenders of concrete sleepers. Therefore, it has now been decided that in all such cases where Railways are not able to procure stores at fair prices for want of the adequate number of suppliers, efforts would be made to develop the new vendors in the public or private sector in order to infuse healthy competition amongst them. It has also been decided that the value of the tender will be determined on the basis of total cost of the supply which will be inclusive of local taxes etc. and it will be kept low to the extent possible.

Safety - Performance and Initiatives

53. As a result of sustained and intensified efforts, the number of consequential train accidents has come down from 415 in 2001-2002, 351 in 2002-2003, and 325 in 2003-2004. During the period April to December 2004 it is 175 (provisional) as compared to 260 during the corresponding period of last year, reflecting a reduction of about 33%.

Special Railway Safety Fund

54. Considerable progress has been made in the execution of works sanctioned under Special Railway Safety Fund (SRSF). Rs. 6504 cr have already been spent upto 31.03.04 and Rs. 3645 cr are likely to be spent during the current financial year making a total of Rs. 10,149 cr. As regards physical progress, 12138 kilometres of track are likely to be renewed up to 31.3.2005 out of the total target of 16,538 kilometres. Out of around 2700 bridges to be rehabilitated/rebuilt from SRSF, 1306 were completed by 31.03.04. In the current year, 411 bridges would be rehabilitated/rebuilt, as targeted. The work of replacement of over-aged signalling systems with modern systems has been completed at 567 stations. The work is in progress at 881 other stations. Interlocking at level crossings with signals is likely to be completed at 300 gates during 2004-05, bringing the total of inter-locked level crossings to 7395 out of 16741 manned level crossings. Track-circuiting works are sanctioned for 5300 locations. Out of these, work has been completed at 2277 locations upto January 2005.

Safety Initiatives

55. **Rolling Stock**: To enable quick response for both rescue and restoration, medical relief trains and trains carrying equipment for restoration have been upgraded for operation at 100 kmph. To facilitate training on improved driving techniques for motormen resulting in better safety performance, it is proposed to provide three simulators for EMU/MEMU Sheds. A pilot project for development of "Track Side Bogie Monitoring System" is proposed to be launched. This system uses wayside detectors to monitor performance of bogies including bearing, which relay warning signals to the nodal stations about abnormal conditions, enabling advance action to be taken before the vehicle causes damage.

56. **Track:** A modern Rail Profile Measuring and Analysis System (RPMS), a laser based contact-less rail measuring device has been commissioned recently on Indian Railways and regular recording of rail features has been started. Apart from this a state of the art, modern Track Recording Car with the additional features has been procured and is likely to be commissioned by March'05. These initiatives will give better monitoring of track geometry for maintenance planning to provide a safer travel and better comfort to the travelling public.

57. **Signalling and Telecommunication**: The first ACD worked section on Indian Railways, designed to prevent collisions, especially at high speeds is likely to be ready by March 2005 on Northeast Frontier Railway. GSM-R based Mobile Train Radio Communication (MTRC) work is in progress over 2415 RKMs. These will prove to be a useful telecommunication and safety aid between various operational and maintenance staff. Train Protection and Warning system, to prevent Signal Passed at Danger (SPAD) by drivers shall be introduced on 280 track kms on certain sections of North Central and Southern Railways during the year 2005-06.

Security

58. With effect from 1st July 2004 Railway Protection Force (RPF) has been entrusted with the responsibilities for better protection of passengers and passenger areas, in addition to railway property, and made responsible for minor offences which affect the passengers and the railway system. On an average 1262 train escort parties are being deployed by RPF daily to supplement the efforts of the GRP and also supplement security in many stations. For taking up the new challenges and additional responsibilities of passenger security, recruitment drive to fill up vacancies in RPF and modernization programme of RPF are in full swing. With these steps, the security to passengers and their belongings is likely to improve considerably.

Concessions

59. Sir, in my last budget speech I had announced that unemployed youth attending interviews for selection to Central Government jobs would be given full concession in second class on production of a certified copy of call letter and application. This year I propose to extend the same concession in second class to unemployed youth appearing for interviews of State Governments jobs also.

60. It is proposed to give 50% concession in Second Class fares to farmers and milk producers for travel to institutes of national level in other parts of the country for the purpose of training/learning better agricultural practices and dairy farming.

61. It is proposed to provide 75% concession in Second Class fares to Government rural school students, once in a year, for study tour.

62. It is proposed to give 75% concession in Second Class fares to girls from rural areas studying in Government schools for the purpose of attending national level entrance examination for medical, engineering and other professional courses in colleges.

63. Railways have been carrying relief material for the people affected by the natural calamities/disasters. It is proposed that in notified cases of National Calamities/Disasters, the transportation of the relief material will be carried on priority and free of cost. It is also proposed that Railways will provide free Second Class transportation to persons stranded in such calamities for their evacuation.

64. It is proposed that the dead bodies of patients who die while undergoing treatment in major Government hospitals will be carried on priority basis, to the nearest rail-head connecting their home town at 50% concession of the normal tariff rates.

Recruitment for Group D posts by field units

65. Sir, in my last budget speech I had announced that the recruitment for RPF posts by the Railway Recruitment Boards would be discontinued and the previous practice of filling up the vacancies directly by the field units would be restored. The results have been satisfactory and there has been an improvement in the process of filling up of vacancies. Therefore, in order to tackle the problem of filling up of Group 'D' vacancies, the recruitment to Group 'D' posts will henceforth be made by the field units, as per earlier practice and not by the RRBs.

Reservation

66. Sir, I am glad to inform this August House that the prescribed percentage of representation of the Scheduled Castes has been attained in all the groups of Railway services. In order to ensure the appropriate representation of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Castes in all the groups of Railway services, special efforts are being made for running special drives.

67. Sir, in the new catering policy provision of 25% reservation in award of licences of small catering units at 'A', 'B' and 'C' category stations and 49.5% reservation at other categories of stations have been made for SC, ST, OBCs, Minorities, war widows and widows of railway employees, freedom fighters and other weaker sections of the society. These categories have been kept out of tendering process in allotment of licences.

68. Sir, last year, I had announced the elimination of the system of sole selling rights over bookstalls all over Indian Railway. I have pleasure informing the House that a reservation of 25% has been made for the people of above mentioned weaker sections of society in the new bookstall policy.

Corporate Welfare Plan

69. Railways propose to prepare a Corporate Welfare Plan to pay special attention towards maintenance and improvement of staff quarters with particular emphasis on substandard quarters lacking basic amenities. For this purpose a ten year plan will be formulated in consultation with the staff representatives.

Achievements of Railways in Sports

70. In the field of sports, the performance of Indian Railways during the year 2004-05 has been outstanding both at National and International levels. Indian Railways Chess team won the Gold Medal in the World Railway USIC Chess Championship held at Piestany (Slovakia) in November, 2004. During the current year Ms. Rachel Thomas, Indian Railway Skydiver has been honoured with prestigious Padmashri Award for adventurous sport. Five Railway sportspersons have been honoured with Arjun Award for their sports achievements and at the National level, Indian Railways sportspersons won 16 National titles in different games.

Medical Facilities

71. Indian Railways with a vast network covering even inaccessible areas has around 600 health units, which require minimal upgradation by way of providing investigation facilities, mobile medical vans, etc., so as to provide better attention to the staff and their families posted in wayside and far-flung stations. Similarly, secondary level health care system will be strengthened in Railway hospitals duly making use of specialists' facilities available in the local areas.

Environment Friendly Steps
Provision for sale of dairy products under Catering Policy

72. In my last Budget Speech I had announced the promotion of sale of milk, curd, mattha and dairy products on Indian Railways for improving the health of passengers. With the same objective, in the new catering policy milk stalls will be allotted to Apex Dairy Cooperative Societies of Centre or State Government without participating in open tender, on the basis of application in all categories of stations. Sale of other hygienic eatables and beverages in eco-friendly potteries/dishes like Kulhars will be promoted on Indian Railways.

Towards Cleaner Trains

73. Given the intensive use of our trains and the long distances travelled, it has been felt that standardization of methods of ensuring complete cleaning of trains at identified intermediate stations is a must. Railways have been working in this direction for the last two years, and a comprehensive system for this purpose has been developed at Ratlam station of Western Railway. In the coming year this standard 'Clean Train Station System' will be implemented on at least one station of each zonal railway and the total number is proposed to be raised to 50 during the course of next five years.

74. I am glad to inform the Hon'ble members that, as a trial measure, use of stainless steel EMU coaches is being adopted in the corrosion prone suburban area of Mumbai using the technology already acquired by M/s Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML). Apart from improving the availability of EMU coaches due to its corrosion resistant features, these EMU coaches will be aesthetically superior, have pleasing ambience and provide neat and clean look to the passengers.

Development of Composite Sleepers

75. Indian Railways have developed an alternative to wooden sleepers in the form of concrete sleepers

and steel channel sleepers. However, there are locations where wooden sleepers are still required. For such locations also, as an alternative to wooden sleepers, composite sleepers, made of recycled waste material have been tried and the initial field trials have been found to be successful. It has, therefore, been decided to go for extensive trials of composite sleepers.

Awards to Rail Wheel Factory, Bangalore

76. In line with Railways' policy to upgrade quality and environmental management systems in Production Units to international standards, Rail Wheel Factory at Yelahanka achieved distinction by winning several National Awards in the current year. Recently, Rail Wheel Factory has also been certified for Occupational Health and Safety Management System conforming to OHSAS-18001.

Other Initiatives
Rail Heritage

77. I am happy to inform this August House that in June 2004, the Mumbai CST building was inscribed by UNESCO as World Heritage Site. I must add that this is the only railway station in the world that has been bestowed this honour. It may be recalled that earlier the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway was inscribed as a World Heritage Site. Considering the social and cultural significance of rail heritage, training on this subject has been started in Railway Staff College.

Indian Railways –UIC Initiatives

78. The World Executive Council Meeting of the Union of International Railways (UIC) is being held in India in April 2005, for the first time under the Chairmanship of Indian Railways, which is a recognition of the importance of Indian Railways in the world Railway community.

79. Towards establishing an International Railway Strategic Management Institute under the aegis of UIC in India, the initial module of the first course for railway managers, would commence in Paris in May, 2005. The second module of this course would be held in Railway Staff College, Vadodara in November, 2005.

Free training to Railway personnel of BIMSTEC countries

80. India's membership of BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral, Technical and Economic Cooperation) is an important articulation of our Government's "Look East" Policy. The first meeting of Railway Chief Executive Officers of BIMSTEC countries was held in New Delhi in September 2004. During the meeting, Indian Railways have offered to train the railway personnel from the member countries free of cost. This gesture was widely appreciated by member countries.

Public Sector Undertakings

81. The performance of Public Sector Undertakings has been satisfactory during the year 2003-04 also. Indian Railway Finance Corporation Ltd. posted a net profit after tax of Rs. 379 crore during the year 2003-04 and paid a dividend of Rs. 110 crore, as against dividend of Rs. 101 crore in the previous year. Container Corporation of India Ltd. registered a turnover of Rs. 1807 crore with a net profit of Rs. 368 crore. The Company paid a dividend of Rs. 81crores during the year 2003-04. IRCON International Ltd. has registered a turnover of Rs. 792 crore with a net profit of Rs. 62 crore and paid a dividend of Rs. 19 crore during the year 2003-04. RITES Ltd. registered a turnover of Rs.285 crore with net profit of Rs.48 crore, and paid a dividend of Rs.12 crore. Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Limited, during the year 2003-04, earned a total income of Rs. 70 crore as against Rs. 53 crore earned during the previous year. Railtel Corporation of India Ltd. increased its earnings to Rs.26 crore in 2003-04. During the year 2003-04, the revenues of KRC have increased from Rs. 227 crore to Rs. 250 crore, that is 10% compared to the previous year. However, to cover it's financing costs Ministry of Railways has provided loans to KRC over the years. The loan amount to end March 2004 is Rs. 1,950 crore.

82. I am happy to report that during the current financial year, an amount of Rs. 100 cr has been declared as interim dividend. IRFCs contribution is Rs. 70 crore in this, whereas Container Corporation of India has paid about Rs. 25 crore and RITES Rs. 4 crore.

83. Consistent with the Government of India's directives to consider issue of bonus shares by profit making PSUs, IRCON, which had a free reserve to the tune of Rs. 647 crore as on 31st March 2004, issued bonus shares in the ratio of 1:1. Accordingly, the paid up share capital of Government of India in IRCON has gone up from Rs. 4.93 cr to Rs. 9.87 cr.

84. Sir, it is a matter of pride that two public sector undertakings under the railways, namely, RITES and IRCON have made a mark and have made successful bids in the international arena. We intend to strengthen the position of our PSUs at the international level by giving them greater autonomy and by bringing about qualitative improvement in their managerial and technical capabilities.

Passenger Services

85. Indian Railways is at present running more than 9000 passenger trains. During the last few years, the railways have registered an annual average growth rate of nearly 3% in the number of passengers. Analysis shows that while on the one hand there are several routes or sections on which there is considerable demand, on the other there are several trains that suffer from lack of patronage due to inconvenient timings or the running of many trains at close intervals. It is, therefore, proposed to review all the trains with low patronage and deploy resources where there is greater need.

New Trains

86. I propose the following services for the year 2005-06:-

1. Muzaffarpur - Howrah Jansadharan Express (weekly)
2. Bhagalpur - Malda Town Express (6 days a week)
3. Bilaspur - Tirupati Express via Visakhapatnam (bi-weekly)
4. Jabalpur - Bhopal Express (daily)
5. Chennai Egmore - Secunderabad Express via Kurnool Town (daily)
6. Madgaon - Mangalore Jan Shatabdi Express (6 days a week)
7. Chennai - Bangalore Shatabdi Express (6 days a week)
8. Bilaspur - Itwari Express (daily)
9. Mangalore – Shravanbelagola Passenger (after completion of new line)
10. Kumbakonam – Thanjavur Passenger (daily)
11. Chennai Egmore - Pondicherry Link Passenger (daily)
12. Guwahati-New Bongaigaon Passenger (daily)
13. Secunderabad – Nanded Express (daily)
14. Secunderabad – Nizambad Passenger (daily)
15. Secunderabad - Bodhan Passenger (daily)
16. Secunderabad - Basar Passenger (daily)
17. Gondia - Balaghat Passenger - 4 Pairs (after gauge conversion)
18. Udaipur - Jaipur Express (after gauge conversion)
19. Yesvantpur- Mangalore Express (via Mysore) (after gauge conversion)
20. Yesvantpur - Mangalore Express (via Arsikere) (after gauge conversion)
21. Madurai - Manamadurai Passenger (after gauge conversion)
22. Thanjavur - Thiruvarur Passenger (after gauge conversion)
23. Udaipur - Chittorgarh Passenger-2 Pairs (after gauge conversion)
24. Kanpur - Farrukhabad Express (after gauge conversion)
25. Kanpur - Farrukhabad Passenger - 2 Pairs (after gauge conversion)
26. Lucknow - Farrukhabad Passenger (after gauge conversion)
27. Rupsa - Bangariposi DMU (after gauge conversion)
28. Ranchi - Lohardaga DMU (after gauge conversion)
29. Bankura - Rainagar DMU (after gauge conversion)
30. Amritsar - Attari DMU (daily)
31. Ajmer - Rewari Passenger (MG) (daily)
32. Hubli - Chikjajur Passenger (daily)
33. Rajkot - Veraval Fast Passenger (daily)
34. Ahmedabad - Mehsana Passenger (MG) (daily)
35. Agra Cantt - Bayana MEMU (daily)
36. Parli - Parbhani Passenger (daily)
37. Jaipur - Rewari Passenger (MG) (daily)
38. Bina – Guna Passenger-2 Pairs (daily)
39. Gondia - Chanda Fort Passenger (6 days a week)
40. Mathura - Bandikui Passenger (via Alwar) (daily)
41. Belgaum - Miraj Passenger-2 Pairs (5 days a week)
42. Gwalior - Guna Passenger (daily)
43. Bhubaneswar - Sambalpur Express (daily)
44. Secunderabad - Gudur Express (daily)
45. Veraval - Ahmedabad Express (via Rajkot) (daily)
46. Udaipur - Nizamuddin Express (after gauge conversion)

In addition to the above services, I propose to run a train between Patna and Amritsar which will be added to 2317/2318 Akal Takht Express.

Extension of Trains

87. It gives me great pleasure to announce the extension of run of the following services:-

1.	5205/5206	New Delhi – Muzaffarpur Lichchavi Express to Samastipur (after completion of terminal extension facilities)
2.	4059/4060	Jaisalmer/Barmer – Delhi Sarai Rohilla to Delhi Junction
3.	4023/4024	Delhi – Farrukhabad Kalindi Express to Bhiwani on one side and to Kanpur on the other (after gauge conversion)
4.	6831/6832	Mysore – Thanjavur Express to Kumbakonnam (after gauge conversion)
5.	2083/2084	Coimbatore - Thanjavur Express to Kumbakonnam (after gauge conversion)
6.	7405/7406	Tirupati – Hyderabad Krishna Express to Nizamabad
7.	1003/1004	Mumbai CST–Nizamabad Devgiri Express to Kacheguda
8.	6333/6334	Trivandrum - Hapa Express to Rajkot-Veraval instead of Rajkot-Hapa
9.	874/877	Tiruchirrappalli – Thanjavur Passenger to Tiruvarur (after gauge conversion)
10.	898/899	Tiruchirrappalli – Thanjavur Passenger to Tiruvarur (after gauge conversion)
11.	133/134	Neemuch – Chittaurgarh Passenger to Udaipur
12.	1 KA/2 KA	Allahabad - Kanpur Central Passenger to Farrukhabad (after gauge conversion)
13.	6607/6608	Chennai Egmore –Erode Express to Coimbatore
14.	9149/9150	Ahmedabad-Dhanbad Parasnath Express to Asansol
15.	9165/9166	Ahmedabad–Muzaffarpur Sabarmati Express to Darbhanga
16.	2659/2660	Chennai – Visakhapatnam Express to Bhubaneswar
17.	2625/2626	Trivandrum-New Delhi Kerala Express to Chandigarh (after extension of new pit line)
18.	4083A/4084A	Delhi-New Jalpaiguri Sikkim Mahananda Link Express to Alipurduar
19.	7603/7604	Kacheguda – Sri Sathyasai Prashanthi Nilayam Express to Yesvantpur
20.	9775/9776	Jaipur – Bangalore Express to Mysore (after doubling)
21.	6327/6328	Trivandrum – Bilaspur Express to Korba (after provision of new pit line)
22.	219/220	Howrah - Malda Town Passenger to Balurghat
23.	2707/2708	Nizamuddin-Secunderabad Andhra Pradesh Sampark Kranti Express to Tirupati via Kurnool Town.
24.	8407/8408	Nizamuddin-Bhubaneswar Hirakud Express to Visakhapatnam
25.	2983/2984	Jaipur-Bilaspur Express to Bhubaneswar
26.	8477/8478	Puri-Nizamuddin Kalinga Utkal Express to Haridwar
27.	2557/2558	Delhi-Muzaffarpur Sapta Kranti Express to Darbhanga

Apart from the above, it is also proposed that 6595/6596 Sanghamitra Express running between Rajendranagar, Patna and Yeshwantpur will now go to Bangalore City instead of Yeshwantpur.

Increase In Frequency

88. Hon'ble Members will be happy to know that weekly frequencies of some popular trains shall be increased. Details are given below:-

1.	1055/1056	Lokmanya Tilak (T) – Gorakhpur Godan Express from tri-weekly to 4 days a week
2.	1059/1060	Lokmanya Tilak (T) –Chhapra Godan Express from weekly to tri-weekly
3.	Puri – Tirupati Service from weekly to 5 days a week	
4.	6123/6124	Chennai Egmore – Trivandrum Ananthapuri Express from 6 days a week to daily

5.	2555/2556	Gorakhpur- New Delhi Gorakhdham Express from tri-weekly to daily with extension to Rohtak
6.	3403/3404	Bhagalpur-Ranchi Vananchal Express from 4 days a week to 5 days a week.
7.	2423A/2424A/ 2435A/2436A	New Delhi-Dibrugarh Town Rajdhani Link Express from tri-weekly to daily.
8.	2661/2662	Chennai Egmore-Tenkasi Podhigai Express from weekly to bi-weekly.
9.	8003/8004	Howrah-Yesvantpur Express from bi-weekly to daily with diversion via Tirupati.
10.	8253/8254	Durg-Bhopal Amarkantak Express from 4 days a week to daily.

89. Further, in order to strengthen the existing services on various routes, I propose to augment the well-patronized trains over Indian Railways wherever feasible by deploying about 400 additional coaches.

90. During the coming year I also propose to speed up over 30 trains, and convert 1063/1064 Dadar-Chennai Express to a superfast train.

Surveys

91. I had announced taking up of 72 surveys in my last Budget Speech. 20 more surveys have further been sanctioned since the presentation of the last budget. I am happy to state that 27 surveys have since been completed and based on results of the survey, further decision is being taken in the Ministry. I am happy to inform the House that execution of a new 85 km BG line from Deoriya Sadar to Hathua via Katia, Samoor, Bhagipatti, Pachdevri, Bathua Bazar, Phulwariya, Salar-Khurd and Lain Bazar has been included in this Budget. Gauge conversions of Chindwara-Nagpur and Pratapnagar-Chota Udaipur have also been included in the Budget. Some other projects have been processed for clearance of the Planning Commission, which include new line from Manoharabad to Kothapalli and Chola to Bulandshehr and gauge conversion of Kolar-Chickballapur and Virudunagar-Manamadurai. The surveys of gauge conversion of the Ankleshwar Rajpipla and Ahmedpur-Katwa are nearing completion. The remaining surveys are in various stages of progress and all the surveys have been targeted for completion during 2005-06.

I**.** New Surveys for following new lines are being taken up:-

1. Jadcherla-Nandyal
2. Manuguru-Ramagendam
3. Mekhliganj – Haldibari
4. Naginimora- Amguri
5. Ningala-Gadhad-Babra-Khijadia Jn.
6. Yamuna Nagar - Patiala
7. Kotturu - Chitradurg via Jagalur
8. Pandharpur-Lonad
9. Rail link to Kundalpur
10. Rewa-Mirzapur
11. Keonjhar–Badampahar
12. Qadian to Beas
13. Ajmer-Kota
14. Anupgarh-Khajuwala - Ramgarh-Jaisalmer .
15. Erode-Palani via Dharapura
16. Satyamangalam-Mettur via Anthur
17. Barhaj Bazar – Faizabad via Dohrighat
18. Digha–Jaleswar
19. Raniganj–Bankura
20. Chandigarh-Baddi
21. Mailaduturai-Tirukadeyur-Taramgambadi-Tirunallar-Karaikal

22. Madhubani-Sitamarhi-Bairgnia via Shivpur, Pakri Deal, Dhaka
23. Muzaffarpur-Janakpur
24. Kusheswarasthan-Darbhanga via Singhia, Akouna, Baheri, Kapchhahi
25. Nawadah-Giridih via Satgawan
26. Sitamarhi-Nirmali
27. Champadaga-Tarakeshwar
28. Amta – Bagnan
29. Kollangode – Trichur
30. Buniyadpur-Kaliaganj
31. Chanchal-Barsoi

II. Surveys for following New Lines are being updated

1. Extension of Naupada–Gunupur line up to Theruvali
2. Bhattu Kalan – Jakhal via Fatehabad and Ratia
3. Puri–Konark
4. Katangi–Tirodi
5. Bargarh–Nawapara Road (via Padampur)
6. Chennai-Cuddalore via Mahabalipuram and Pondicherry
7. Amethi to Sahaganj via Sultanpur/Qadipur
8. Etah-Kasganj
9. Gaya – Daltonganj via Imamganj
10. Hissar-Sirsa via Agroha

III. New Surveys for conversion of following line to broad gauge are being taken up:-

1. Extension of Rupsa–Bangriposi gauge conversion up to Gurumahishasini

IV. Surveys for gauge conversion of the following lines are being updated

1. Raipur–Dhamtari
2. Bhuj-Naliya with extension to Baranda/Koteswar
3. Mavli-Marwar
4. Mehsana -Taranga Hill with extension upto Ambaji
5. Pathankot-Jogindernagar
6. Madurai – Bodinayakanur

V. New surveys for doubling of the following lines are being taken up:-

1. Laksar-Haridwar-Dehradun
2. Itarsi -Nagpur-Wardha-Ballarshah 3rd line
3. Valmikinagar-Narkatiaganj-Muzaffarpur
4. Ballarshah-Kazipet 3rd line
5. Kazipet-Vijaywada-Gudur 3rd line
6. Jharsuguda-Champa 3rd line

7. Durg-Nagpur 3rd line
8. Padampahar-Banspani
9. Ratlam-Vadodra 3rd line

VI. Surveys for doubling of the following lines are being updated:-

10. Meerut-Saharanpur

Chapra Wheel Plant

92. Sir, in my last budget speech I had announced that a wheel manufacturing plant should be set up at Chapra to reduce dependence on import of wheels. I am happy to inform the House that the work of setting up of wheel manufacturing plant at Chapra has been included in the budget.

New Concrete Sleeper Plants

93. In order to remove mismatch between the production capacity and the requirement and to avoid long distance transportation of concrete sleepers, it has been decided to set up 12 new concrete sleeper plants in the country. Out of these, five plants at Chak Sikander, Dauram Madhepura, Sitamarhi, Palghat and Harihar would be set up on immediate need basis.

94. To encourage development of infrastructure and industry in the state of Jammu & Kashmir and northeastern region. Railways have decided to simplify rules relating to setting up of industrial units in these areas for supply of track components. Railways have decided to give special dispensation to the existing policy of approving new vendors.

Annual Plan 2005-06

95. Sir, I would now like to present the Annual Plan 2005-06. The Plan outlay for 2005-06 has been kept at Rs.11,827 crore. Taking into account the outlay of Rs.3,522 crore on safety related works through the Special Railway Safety Fund (SRSF), the total outlay comes to Rs.15,349 crore. This is Rs.851 crore more than the outlay of last year. In addition to this, in order to improve the productivity and efficiency of the Indian Railways, the Hon'ble Prime Minister has directed the Planning Commission to allow the Ministry of Railways to access extra budgetary resources to the extent of Rs 3000 crore by identifying and posing financially viable throughput enhancement schemes on a projectised basis. For the year 2005-06, the total funds received from General Exchequer are Rs. 7,230.81 crore, which include Rs. 2,699 crore for SRSF, Rs. 710.81 crore from the Central Road Fund leaving a net budgetary support of Rs. 3821 crore for distribution to different planheads. The corresponding figure of last year's budget estimates was Rs. 7,020 crore, including Rs. 2,075 crore for the SRSF and Rs. 401 crore from the Central Road Fund.

96. In addition to the budgetary support, I propose to provide Rs.4,718 crore for plan expenditure through internal resource generation which is higher than what was budgeted for previous year by Rs.990 crore. As in previous years, extra-budgetary resources through market borrowing from Indian Railways Finance Corporation will provide the balance requirement of the Plan. The market borrowing targeted for 2005-06 is Rs. 3,400 crore. For the Special Railway Safety Fund, the contribution of the Central Government would be supplemented by Railways' own contribution which is expected to be Rs.823 crore, taking the total outlay under SRSF to Rs.3,522 crore.

97. Sir, the thrust of the Annual Plan is towards works for enhancement of throughput, safety and development. The total outlay for the five major plan project heads this year has been kept at Rs.2,185 crore with Rs.658 crore on New Lines, Rs.645 crore on Gauge Conversion, Rs.505 crore for Doubling and Rs.102 crore for Electrification. The outlay on metropolitan transport projects has been kept at Rs.275 crore. Apart from this, Rs.493 crore received as EAP element for projects to be executed by the Rail Vikas Nigam are being allotted to several works in the planheads New Lines, Doubling, Gauge Conversion and Railway Electrification. The outlay on safety related planheads, inclusive of outlay given under the Special Railway Safety Fund, is Rs.2,623 crore for Track Renewals, Rs.755 crore for the Bridges and Rs.1,185 crore for Signalling & Telecommunications.

98. Additional funds to the tune of Rs 1365 crore have been sought for the national project of Udhampur Srinagar Baramulla new line and the newly declared national projects of the northeastern region. Release of funds to these would be made in the course of the year based on the pace of work. Similarly, the additional

funds of Rs 358 crore sought for the works being executed by RVNL would also be released as necessary during the course of the year.

Ongoing Projects

99. During the year 2004-05, about 1400 kms of broad gauge (BG) lines are likely to be added as against the progress of 1222 kms achieved during 2003-04. For the year 2005-06, a target of addition of 1692 km of BG lines has been set.

100. Sir, I had mentioned in my Budget Speech 2004-05 that time bound targets for completion of projects in the Northeast region would be fixed. I express my heartfelt gratitude to the Hon'ble Prime Minister for having approved Kumarghat-Agartala and Jiribam-Imphal Road (Tupul) new line and Lumding-Silchar-Jiribam gauge conversion projects as "National Projects". The targets for completion of these have been fixed as March 2007, March 2010 and March 2009 respectively. The completion of these projects is expected to meet the long-standing aspirations of the people of the area.

101. Sir, the challenging National Project of Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla is one of the flag ship projects of Indian Railways, and all out efforts are being made to complete this expeditiously, despite the technical hurdles and certain other problems. The progress in Udhampur-Katra suffered a setback due to heavy ingress of underground water in one of the tunnels. The technical solution to this unforeseen problem is being worked out. The progress in the Quazigund-Baramulla and Katra-Quazigund sections has also suffered due to various reasons. Government is taking all action to provide security on the project alignment and to expedite the progress of the project.

Route Wise Throughput Enhancement

102. Sir, this year a special effort has been made to sanction a greater number of route wise throughput enhancement works to remove congestions on the golden quadrilateral and its diagonals and to bring remarkable improvement in the operating efficiency of the Railways. These include terminal improvement works to bring down the turn round of wagons, deployment of modern signalling and telecommunication to enhance line capacity, doubling of railway lines, IT related initiatives to improve productivity and efficiency.

103. Sir, the financing of traffic facility works is done through the Development Fund also. With a view to making available adequate funds for throughput enhancement works, the proposed appropriation to this Fund in the current and ensuing year is Rs 3578 crore as against Rs 1280 crore in the last two years, i.e., 2002-03 and 2003-04, which is three times more. Apart from this, extra budgetary resources of Rs 3000 crore on a projectised basis and Rs 851 crore through Rail Vikas Nigam would be available based on need. I have already covered the IT and signalling and telecommunication related initiatives earlier in my speech and would now like to elaborate on the remaining.

Terminal Improvement Works

104. Besides the 200 odd sanctioned works relating to improvement of terminals, another 42 terminals are proposed to be covered for providing facilities for full rake placement and round the clock working.

Doubling

105. During 2004-2005, doubling of 307 kms is likely to be completed while for the year 2005-06, a target of 538 kms has been fixed.

106. In Kerala, the impetus for progressing with the doubling of Mangalore-Shoranur is being maintained and 30 kms from Pallipuram to Shoranur is targeted for completion during 2004-05. On the Jallandhar-Jammu Tawi section, progress of doubling is being expedited so as to complete the same by March 2007. The completion of doubling of Nergundi-Cuttack-Raghunathpur, Khurda Road-Delang and Sambalpur-Sason in Orissa, Korba-Gevra Road in Chhattisgarh, Diara-Singur, Champahati-Ghutiarisharif, Bandel-Bansberia, Eklakhi-Kumarganj-Harishchanderpur in West Bengal, Chapra-Hajipur in Bihar, Tornagallu-Hospet, Hagari-Bellary, Bangalore-Bidadi in Karnataka, Panvel-JNPT in Maharashtra, Pallipuram-Shoranur in Kerala, Korrukupet-Ennore in Tamil Nadu and Cheonki-Lohagara, Zafarabad-Uttratia Chandrauli and Sultanpur-Bandhuakalam in Uttar Pradesh would add to the line capacity on certain congested routes.

107. Apart from this, doubling of the sections Jharsuguda-Rengali, Kursela-Seemapur, Maheshkunt-Thanabihpur, Bhimsen-Juhi, Sahjanwa-Munderwa, Babhnan-Mankapur, Ekma-Jiradei, Jaipur-Dausa, Salka Road –Khongsara ,Chinpain-Sainthia and third line between Panki- Bhaupur, Bhilai-Durg and Allahabad-Subedarganj have been proposed for inclusion in the budget. The completion of these projects will improve traffic flows and add to line capacity on some of the saturated routes.

Gauge Conversion

108. Gauge conversions of Bharatpur-Agrafort of Agrafort-Bandikui, Adilabad-Kinvat of Mudkhed-Adilabad, Madurai-Manamadurai of Madurai-Rameswaram, Rupsa-Baripada of Rupsa-Bangriposi, Manoharabad-Nizamabad, Viramgam-Mehsana and Sihor-Palitana have been completed during the current

year. Further, gauge conversions of Chhitaurgarh-Udaipur, Samukhtala Road-New Bongaigaon, Thanjavur-Tiruvarur of Trichy-Nagore-Karaikal, Bijapur-Basavanabagewadi of Sholapur-Gadag, Bankura-Sonamukhi of Bankura-Damodar river railway line, Mansi-Saharsa and Ranchi-Lohardaga are likely to be completed during the year. The progress of Gondia-Balaghat of Jabalpur-Gondia, Barsoi-Radhikapur of Jogbani-Katihar-Radhikapur and Sakleshpur-Subramania road of Hassan-Mangalore is also being expedited so as to open these sections early.

109. During the year 2005-06, a target of completion of 935 kms of gauge conversion has been proposed which include the following sections:-

1. Kumbakonam-Mayiladuthurai of Villupuram-Thanjavur
2. Manamadurai-Mandapam of Madurai-Rameswaram
3. Trichy-Puddukotai of Trichy - Manamadurai
4. Samastipur-Khagaria-Mansi
5. Kanpur-Anwarganj-Farrukhabad of Kanpur-Kasganj-Mathura
6. Secunderabad-Bolaram
7. Delhi-Rewari
8. Virddhachallam-Attur of Salem-Cuddalore
9. Palanpur-Samkhiali of Gandhidham –Palanpur

Railway Electrification

110. I am glad to inform the House that the electrification of Renigunta-Nandalur, Balasore-Bhadrak and Kurda Road – Puri rail lines has been completed and train services introduced on these sections. Electrification on the Chennai-Kolkata route from Chennai to Barang and Kharagpur to Bhadrak has already been completed. Work is in progress on the remaining sections and is likely to be completed by March 2005. The electrification target of 375 kms for the current year is expected to be achieved. The work of electrification of Moradabad-Lucknow-Utretia has also been included in this budget.

111. For 2005-06, electrification of 350 route kilometers has been targeted. This will cover the following sections:

1. Najibabad-Moradabad
2. Paravur-Trivandrum
3. Krishnanagar-Behrampur
4. Tirupati-Pakala-Katpadi
5. Talcher-Angul

Electrification of Villupuram-Pondicherry is also being taken up with 50% of the cost being borne by the Government of Pondicherry.

Suburban Transport Projects

112. Phase-I of Thane-Turbhe-Vashi section in Navi Mumbai has been completed and opened for passenger traffic in November, 2004. Work on the second phase viz., Turbhe-Nerul section, is in progress.

113. Gauge Conversion works of full section between Chennai Beach and Chengalpattu has been completed and opened for traffic in November 2004. The BG link between Chennai Egmore and Chennai Central has been approved as a part of the on-going suburban gauge conversion project.

114. The Tirumailai-Tiruvamniyur section of the Tirumailai-Velacheri phase-II has already been commissioned. The remaining section from Tiruvamniyur-Velacheri is slated for opening during 2006-07.

115. The proposal to extend MRTS phase-II from Velacheri to St. Thomas Mount is under the consideration of Ministry of Railways. The Government of Tamil Nadu has already given its commitment for sharing two-third of the cost of this line. This scheme will be further processed for necessary approvals.

116. The extensions of Circular Railway, Kolkata, from Princepghat to Majerhat and from Dum Dum to Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Airport are expected to be completed by March 2005.

117. Extension of Metro Railway, Kolkata, from Tollygunge to Garia is expected to be completed by the year 2007.

New Lines

118. I am happy to state that New Lines from Kakinada to Kotapalli, Kanthi-Digha of Tamluk-Digha and Mahenderlalnagar-Amta of Howrah-Amta have already been completed. It is hoped to complete Amravati-Chandurbazar, Nokha-Sanjauli, Rajgir-Nekpur of Rajgir-Tilaiya, Hassan-Sharavanabelagola and Bangalore-Neelamangala of Bangalore-Hassan during the year. Further, works on Chandigarh-Morinda of Chandigarh-Ludhiana and Banka-Barhat of Deogarh-Sultanganj are in advanced stages of completion.

119. In 2005-06, Railways propose to complete 219 kms of new lines including the following sections:

1. Nekpur-Natesar of Rajgir - Tilaiya.
2. Banka-Barhat of Deogarh-Sultanganj.

3. Chandigarh-Morinda of Chandigarh-Ludhiana.
4. Sanjauli-Piro of Ara-Sasaram.
5. Kolayat-Phalodi.
6. Gandhinagar-Kalol.

Budget Estimates 2005-06

120. Sir, I shall now deal with the Budget Estimates for 2005-2006.

121. Enthused by the trend of buoyancy in freight loading in 2004-05, the Railways are expecting to carry 635 million tonnes of revenue earning originating freight traffic during 2005-2006, which is 35 million tonnes more than the traffic likely to be lifted in the current year. This increase is higher than the average incremental freight achieved in the last few years. The originating passenger traffic is estimated to go up by about 4 per cent, which along with certain measures will result in increasing the earnings by 7.4 per cent over the Revised Estimates of the current year. Considering the initiatives taken in parcel segment, the 'Other Coaching' earnings are expected to grow by 10 percent. 'Sundry Other' earnings are expected to grow by 5 per cent.

122. On the basis of these assumptions and considering the various rationalization measures proposed in the budget, the Gross Traffic Receipts (GTR) are estimated at Rs 50,968 cr. These are Rs 4,183 cr higher than the Revised Estimates of the current financial year.

123. Ordinary working expenses are estimated to be Rs. 35,600 cr, 7% more than the revised estimates of the current year. Appropriation to pension fund from revenue will be Rs. 6,940 cr. Despite making an unprecedented appropriation of Rs.3,604 cr to Depreciation Reserve Fund, which is around 60% more than the appropriation of Rs. 2,267 cr made in the Budget Estimates of the current year, operating ratio is expected to improve to 90.8%. The working ratio of 87% of Budget Estimates for the current year is expected to improve significantly to 83% in the next year's Budget Estimates. Sir, after implementation of the recommendations of the Fifth Pay Commission the Operating Ratio is expected to reach this level for the first time in eight years. I express my commitments to bring down the operating ratio to less than 85% in the coming years through strict control on ordinary working expenses and after making adequate provision to DRF by enhancing revenue earning capabilities of the Indian Railways. Sir, I know that this is a very difficult and challenging task.

"Jeevan ke har path par mali pushp nahi bikhrata hai,
Pragati ka path aksar pathrila hi hota hai"

124. The total Working Expenses will, thus, amount to Rs 46,144 cr leading to the Net Traffic Receipts of Rs 4,824 cr. Taking together the effect of Net Miscellaneous Receipts, the Net Revenue works out to Rs 5,914cr.

125. A memorandum on the rate of dividend payable to General Revenues for 2005-06 is under the consideration of Railway Convention Committee. The committee has recommended a reduction in rate of dividend for 2004-05 from 7% to 6.5%. As resolution for this recommendation is yet to be adopted by the Parliament, the dividend for the current year and for the next year has been provided at the same rates as adopted for 2003-04. On this basis, dividend liability for 2005-2006 works out to Rs 3,638 cr. Along with payment of Rs. 300 cr towards deferred dividend, an amount of Rs 3,938 cr becomes payable to the General Revenues. This liability will be discharged in full.

126. The above projections are expected to yield Rs 4718 cr towards the Plan outlay for the year, from the internal resources.

Freight Services

127. I do not propose any across the board increase in freight rates for 2005-06.

128. I propose to make historic changes in the goods tariff to make it simple, rational and transparent.

"Pa hi lenge, aakhir manjil rahon ki mohtaz nahin,
Saath ho ummidon ka, kal hoga wahi jo aaj nahin"

129. Due to this simplification the Goods Tariff, which runs into a thick volume of more than five hundred pages containing over 4000 commodities, will now be condensed into a few pages only.

130. In the proposed rationalisation, the Goods Tariff will have only 80 groups of commodities instead of the existing over 4000 commodities. Each group, under a Main Commodity Head, shall have a single uniform class for the different commodities in the group, irrespective of their being in different physical forms or shapes and their different conditions, whether raw or manufactured. A copy of the rationalised Goods Tariff is given as an Annexure to the Memorandum Explaining the adjustments in Passenger Fares and Freight Rates.

131. Presently, minimum chargeable weight of the wagon is prescribed keeping in view the nature of the commodity to be loaded. For lightweight items this is considerably less than the carrying capacity of the wagon. This procedure for fixation of the minimum weight condition for different commodities is not only cumbersome but has also been causing dis-satisfaction to the rail users. Therefore, for all commodities, freight will be charged based upon the carrying capacity of wagons. As despite putting lighter commodities in the lowest Class-90 there may be an appreciable increase in their freight rates, it is proposed to introduce three new classes below Class-90 viz. 90-W_1, 90-W_2 and 90-W_3. With the introduction of these three new classes, while the increase in freight will be contained to the barest minimum for most of the commodities, there will also be a marginal reduction in the freight in certain cases. Otherwise also the aim of these revolutionary reforms is not to earn revenue but to simplify the cumbersome procedure.

132. The existing freight structure has 27 classes, in intervals of "Fives" from Class-90 to Class-190 and in intervals of "Tens" from Class-190 to Class-250. It is proposed to have a freight structure with uniform interval of "Tens" between the successive classes. It is also proposed to reduce the highest class from Class-250 to Class-240 to make the freight structure more compact. The total number of classes shall, accordingly, stand reduced from the existing total of 27 classes to 19 classes. To ensure that freight rates of commodities being used by common man are not increased, classes of kerosene and LPG have been reduced from 135 to 130 and 185 to 180 respectively. As a result the freight for Kerosene and LPG will get reduced by 3.7% and 2.7% respectively.

133. The existing classification of different types of Chemical Manures ranges from Class-90 to Class-115. In the proposed rationalisation, the entire group of Chemical Manures will have a single uniform Class-100. This will result in a reduction in the freight rates of many chemical manures and increase in some cases.

134. Sir, our government is committed to the well-being of the economically under-privileged sections of society. Keeping this in view, the transportation of Food Grains and Pulses is done even below Base Class-100 at Class-90 and the resultant loss of earnings from short distances is being borne by the railways. To bear this loss of earnings in public interest is our government's commitment but there is no justification in incurring such losses in the transportation of non-PDS and non PAP food grains and pulses. Therefore, the classification for Food Grains and Pulses is proposed to be revised to Class-120. However, Food Grains for Public Distribution System and Poverty Alleviation Programmes and for other relief works shall be charged at Class-100 so as to avoid increase in their freight rates. Often open wagons return empty on Indian Railways. To reduce empty movement of such rakes, food grains for public distribution system, etc. will be carried at Class-90.

135. A large portion of freight traffic on Indian Railways comes from programmed traffic. We have long-term relationship with such customers and we transport their goods year after year in a planned manner. Therefore, apart from the transporters of programmed Iron-Ore, who also have private sidings in their steel plants, all other transporters of Iron-Ore will be charged at Class-160 instead of Class-140.

136. Freight customers, particularly exporters, often require rakes at short notice, but timely supply of the same is not possible due to long waiting lists. Keeping in view the convenience of such customers a new "Premium Registration Scheme" has been drawn up. Under this scheme, those who are willing to pay freight at two classes higher than the prescribed class shall be accorded higher preference in allotment of rakes within the same class of priority. To avoid inconvenience to non-premium customers, at least two days in a week will be reserved for allotment of rakes strictly as per the date of registration.

137. In order to encourage public-private partnership in procurement of wagons to meet the anticipated incremental freight traffic in the coming years, it has been decided to introduce an attractive new scheme called "Wagon Investment Scheme". The customers investing in railway wagons will be assured of the supply of a guaranteed number of rakes every month based on the number of rakes procured and the turn round of the type of wagons, which will be in addition to the normal supply of rakes to such customers. For such guaranteed rakes, there will be a rebate in freight of 10% for BOXN wagons for 10 years and BCN wagons upto 15 years. For such customers adopting the engine on load scheme also, additional two rakes per month will be made available on a guaranteed basis, but there will be no freight rebate on these additional rakes. Apart from this, provision has also been made to provide higher priority in the Preferential Traffic Order for such customers.

Passenger services

138. As Hon'ble Members are aware while presenting the Budget for the current financial year I had decided not to increase passenger fares at all. Noted poet Nagarjuna from Bihar in his book 'Apne Khet Mein' has written:-

"Jaan lo bhaiya, gharibon ki ek hoti jaat
Usi ke hukum se, hilenge ek-ek paat"

139. Sir, considering the advice given by Nagarjuna Baba, I do not propose to increase any fares in this budget.

Conclusion

140. Sir, I consider it a privilege and also a unique opportunity to lead the Railways. I would like to assure the August House that we will make every possible effort to improve its performance in every field. I acknowledge the enthusiasm and unstinted support of railwaymen without whose dedicated efforts the creditable achievements of the Railways would not have been possible. Our thanks are also due to passengers and users of the Railway whose co-operation we have always been getting and I expect that this co-operation will be forthcoming in future too.

141. Sir, over the last many years, the investment in railway's infrastructure has, in real terms, not been sufficient to keep pace with the growth of the economy and meet the aspirations of the people. Hon'ble Prime Minister has time and again stressed his commitment to ensure that this system becomes one of the best Railway systems in the world and has assured me that funds for this challenging task would be forthcoming without any hindrance. While placing on record my gratitude for his generous gesture, it will be my endeavour to fulfil the expectations of the nation.

142. With these words, Sir, I commend the Railway Budget 2005 - 2006 to the House.

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