INDIAN RAILWAYS

FEBRUARY 2026 | PRICE `20

BUDGET FY 2026-27

RAILWAYS RECEIVES A RECORD CAPITAL EXPENDITURE OF

₹ 2,93,030 CRORE



INDIA'S FIRST VANDE BHARAT SLEEPER TRAIN (HOWRAH–KAMAKHYA)



The Railway Employees' Co-operative Credit Society Limited,

Ashok Vihar Complex, Old Zoo Road, (Near Central Railway Station) Chennai - 600 003.

Branches at : ASK, BGM, BVRM, BWT, BZA, DMM, GDG, GNT, GTL, GY, HX, HYB, JRU, KZJ, LD, MBNR, MYS, NDKD, NDL, NLR, NZB, OGL, RJY, SBC, TPTY, TUNI, UBL, WADI & YNK.

New Branches to be opened at : Nanded.

Dr.N. KANNIAH, Ph.D., Started in the year 1907 and successfully serving the members for the past 118 years

Any Railway Employee who has completed Three months of regular service can join as a member and can avail Loan, after receipt of 3 CMTD recoveries through salary.

The following loans are offered by our Society to the Member's

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❖ upto Rs.35.00 Lakhs ❖upto 120 EMI
❖ One Surety

Marriage Loan

❖ upto Rs.12.00 Lakhs ❖upto 120 EMI
❖ One Surety

Education Loan

❖ upto Rs.1,00,000/- ❖ upto 12 EMI
❖ No Surety

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❖ International Tour for Member & family
❖ upto 120 EMI ❖One Surety

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❖ upto Rs.10,00,000/- ❖ upto 60 EMI
❖One Surety ❖for Festival & Family Functions

Gold Loan

❖ upto Rs. 10.00 Lakhs
❖ upto 120 EMI
❖ One Surety
❖ Gold and Silver Coins from M/s.MMTC-PAMP India Pvt. Ltd.

50 Grams Silver Coin
Stylised Laxmi Ganesh Colour Coin Capsule Type



10 gm - 24 Ct Gold Coin



20 gm - 24 Ct Gold Coin



Member Welfare Schemes :

- For the benefit of our Members, the Society is offering Four Welfare Schemes (as per Rules and Regulations)
  - Loan Coverage Scheme (upon death of a Member) (Free Loan Insurance Scheme for all Loans)
  - Distress Relief Fund
  - Accident Insurance Scheme
  - Education Award
- Personal Accident Coverage of Rs.10 Lakhs : You are covered under Personal Accident Coverage Scheme of the Society, for a Sum of Rs.10 Lakhs, subject to the rules and regulations governing the same.
- In the event of loss of organs, arising out of an accident, then compensation ranging from **Rs.10 Thousand** to **Rs.10 Lakhs** will be paid, depending upon the loss of organs and or earning capacity, as per the Rules of the Insurance Company, MV Act and IRDA Rules.
- Any loss of life / Organs, on account of Suicide / Accidents / Incidents, occurring on account of Consumption of Alcohol / Drugs / Intoxicants and loss of life on account of pre existing chronic illness are NOT COVERED, under any of the Welfare Schemes of the Society.
- Please note that, in case of any accident, intimation should be given to the society, within 24 hours, from the time and date of such occurrence and in any case, not later than three days, from the date of occurrence, failing which, no claim shall be entertained.
- All Welfare Schemes are subject to the Rules and Regulations applicable for each such Scheme/s, Bye Laws of the Society, as per MSCS Act 2002 and its rules and other relevant laws.
- Conditions as per the Bye-Law, rules and regulations framed by the Board of Directors, as existing and as may be amended from time to time, shall apply. All disputes / issues are covered under the provisions of MSCS Act & Rules 2002, Bye-Laws of the Society and are under Chennai Jurisdiction only.

Under the 4 Welfare Schemes, as on 31.10.2025

Rs. 187.10 Crores

have been paid to

20,899 Members, Member's Families and Sureties

No Processing Fees
Documentation Charges
Online Transfer Charges
Loan Insurance Charges

Only Society Continuously Paying DIVIDEND to the Members for 118 Years, without fail.

Free SMS Alert for
- EMI Received / EMI Not received details
- Monthly Statement of Account details
- Introduction of New Schemes details
- Loan amount transfered to Bank Account details with RBI UTR No.

All our Branches are Computerised, Loan Applications received upto 12.00 noon at the branches will be processed and the payment will be arranged on the following day itself, subject to eligibility. All loans, Schemes etc., are as per the rules, regulations, Byelaws and MSCS Act 2002.

For the benefit of our Members, the Society has made arrangements for using *"WhatsApp"*. Add the following Numbers, 9344877273, 7824820162, in your Contact List, so that, *"WhatsApp Groups"* of our Members, can be created and information from the Society, is directly passed on to you. Facility also exists for the Members, to directly contact the Headquarters of the Society, through *"Zoom App"*. Hence, it is suggested that, the *"Zoom App"* may be downloaded, in your Mobile Phone, so that the Society can send a Link, for direct Video Call, as and when required.

For enquiry Contact

08148387240, 08148387241, 08148387242, 07418148957

N. MANIVANNAN
Chief Executive

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YOGESH AVASTHI
EDITOR

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE
EDITOR, INDIAN RAILWAYS
411, RAIL BHAWAN, NEW DELHI-110001
Email: editorindianrailways@gmail.com

BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS
SANJEEV GUPTA
BUSINESS MANAGER,
310, RAIL BHAWAN, NEW DELHI-110001
Email : bmpr310rb@gmail.com
Tel : 47845378, 45378 (Rly.)



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Union Budget of Financial Year 2026-27

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Editorial

Indian Railways: Powering the Journey Towards a Developed India

Indian Railways is poised to play a decisive role in India's march towards becoming a Viksit Bharat. The announcements made in the Union Budget 2026–27 clearly signal that the Indian railways are being positioned as a key driver of economic growth, sustainable mobility, and integrated national development.

In the Union Budget 2026–27, Indian Railways has been provided a record capital expenditure (Capex) outlay of ₹2,93,030 crore, the highest ever allocation in its history. Alongside an overall budgetary support of ₹2.78 lakh crore, the focus is firmly on expanding high-speed connectivity, strengthening freight transportation, and enhancing safety standards. This unprecedented investment reflects the government's long-term vision of transforming Indian Railways into a modern, efficient, and green transport system.

As part of this vision, the government has announced the development of seven new intercity high-speed rail corridors, described as "growth connectors", aimed at promoting environmentally sustainable passenger transport. These corridors include Mumbai–Pune, Pune–Hyderabad, Hyderabad–Bengaluru, Hyderabad–Chennai, Chennai–Bengaluru, Delhi–Varanasi, and Varanasi–Siliguri. Together, these corridors will span nearly 4000 km and are expected to attract investments of around ₹16 lakh crore. Once operational, they will significantly reduce travel time between major cities and enable seamless, multimodal mobility for passengers.

Freight transportation and logistics efficiency have also received a major boost. The budget proposes a new Dedicated Freight Corridor from Dankuni in West Bengal to Surat in Gujarat, passing through Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra. Spanning 2052 km, this corridor will integrate with the existing Western Dedicated Freight Corridor, ensuring uninterrupted and faster movement of goods to ports along the western coast, thereby strengthening India's supply chains and industrial competitiveness.

A significant milestone in passenger services was marked with the launch of the country's first Vande Bharat Sleeper train. The Howrah–Guwahati Vande Bharat Sleeper was flagged off by the Prime Minister from Malda Town Railway Station. In January 2026 alone, Indian Railways introduced two Vande Bharat Sleeper trains, 20 Amrit Bharat Express services, and six other new train services, further enhancing passenger convenience and connectivity.

We would love to hear your feedback on this issue.

TABLE OF CONTENT



6 **Prime Minister Flags off**
India's First Vande Bharat Sleeper Train between Howrah and Guwahati

9 **Vande Bharat Sleeper Train**
Set to Revolutionise Long-Distance Travel

11 **Prime Minister Flags off**
Three Amrit Bharat Express Trains

12 **Financial Year 2026-27**
Railways Receives A Record Capital Expenditure of ₹2,93,030 crore



16 **State-wise Budget Allocation**

19 **Economic Survey 2025-26**
Indian Railways

21 **Bullet Train Project**
Achieves Second Mountain Tunnel Breakthrough in Palghar

23 **52 Reforms in 52 Weeks**
Railways Sharpens Focus on Safety, AI & Tech, Talent and Passenger Experience



24 **MR Confers Ati Vishisht Rail Seva** Puraskar on 100 Officials and Awards 25 Shields to Top Zones

26 **On the occasion, a commemorative coin** marking 100 years of electrification in Indian Railways was also launched

34 **Kavach 4.0 : Expanding total Coverage** to over 1300 RKm across 5 Zones

35 **IR Marks New Milestone in High-** Density Freight Operations

36 **In a First, 42-Wagon, 2768 Metric Tonne** Foodgrain Rake Reaches Anantnag Via All-Weather Rail Connectivity

37 **Fertilizer Supplies Cross 530 LMT** as Rail Movement Peaks in Kharif and Rabi Seasons

38 **Indian Railways Celebrated Republic** Day with Fervour and Gaiety

40 **Trucks-on-Trains**

43 **Fourth Line of** Baikunth-Urkura Approved

44 **Record Production of Modern** General and Non-AC Coaches Supports Passenger-Centric Rail Reforms

46 **Timetable of Trains 2026** 549 Trains Get Faster, 122 New Services added across Railways

50 **President's Service Medals** Conferred on RPF, RPSF Personnel

51 **News of Zonal Railways** and Production Units

54 **Sports**

56 **Bridges of India**

58 **How a Single Critical Failure** Can Collapse Even the Best Services *R. N. Singh*

61 **Excellence in Vande Bharat** Maintenance through Digital Innovation *Chirag Srivastav*



Prime Minister Flags off

India's First Vande Bharat Sleeper Train between Howrah and Guwahati

Also Flags off

New Jalpaiguri - Nagercoil Amrit Bharat Express

Alipurduar - SMVT Bengaluru Amrit Bharat Express

New Jalpaiguri - Tiruchchirappalli Amrit Bharat Express

Alipurduar - Mumbai (Panvel) Amrit Bharat Express

Radhikapur - SMVT Bengaluru Express

Balurghat - SMVT Bengaluru Express

Lays the Foundation Stone for

New Rail Line between Balurghat and Hili

Next Generation Freight Maintenance facilities at New Jalpaiguri

Upgradation of Loco Shed at Siliguri

Upgradation of maintenance facilities for Vande Bharat trains

Dedicates to the Nation

Electrification of Rail line between New Coochbehar and Bamanhat (50 km)

Electrification of Rail Line between New Coochbehar and Boxirhat (45 km)



Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off India's first Vande Bharat Sleeper train between Howrah and Guwahati (Kamakhya) and also virtually flagged off the Guwahati (Kamakhya)–Howrah Vande Bharat Sleeper train at Malda Town Railway Station in West Bengal on 17th January, 2026.



PM Narendra inaugurating and laying the foundation stone of rail projects from Malda Town Railway Station, along with Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, West Bengal Governor C. V. Ananda Bose and other dignitaries

Developed to meet the growing transportation needs of modern India, the fully air-conditioned Vande Bharat Sleeper train will offer passengers an air travel–like experience at affordable fares. It will make long-distance travel faster, safer, and more convenient. By reducing travel time by approximately 2.5 hours on the Howrah–Guwahati (Kamakhya) route, the train will significantly boost religious pilgrimage and tourism.

At another event in Malda, the Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for four major railway projects in West Bengal. These include a new rail line between Balurghat and Hilli, next-generation freight maintenance facilities at New Jalpaiguri, the upgradation of the Siliguri loco shed, and the modernization of the Vande Bharat train maintenance facility in Jalpaiguri district. These projects will strengthen passenger and freight operations, improve logistics efficiency in North Bengal, and create employment opportunities in the region.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacting with students inside a Vande Bharat Sleeper Train at Malda Town Railway Station

The Prime Minister also dedicated to the nation the electrification of the New Coochbehar-Bamanhat and New Coochbehar-Boxirhat rail lines, enabling faster, cleaner and more energy-efficient train operations.

PM Further Virtually Flagged off Four New Amrit Bharat Express Trains

- New Jalpaiguri-Nagercoil
- New Jalpaiguri-Tiruchchirappalli
- Alipurduar-SMVT Bengaluru and
- Alipurduar-Mumbai (Panvel).

These services will strengthen affordable and reliable long-distance connectivity, benefiting citizens, students, migrant workers and traders, while enhancing inter-state economic and social linkages.

Also strengthen the connectivity of Bengal, especially North Bengal, with South and West India. This is particularly for those passengers who come from different parts of the country to visit Bengal and Eastern India—those who come for the darshan of Ganga Sagar, Dakshineswar and Kalighat. These Amrit Bharat Express trains will make the journey easier for those travelling from here to Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.

The Prime Minister also flagged off two new train services featuring LHB coaches—Radhikapur-SMVT Bengaluru and Balurghat-SMVT Bengaluru Express. These trains will offer the region's youth, students and IT professionals direct, safe and comfortable connectivity to major IT and employment hubs like Bengaluru.

PM's Address



Today, the campaign to accelerate West Bengal's progress from Malda has gained even more momentum. A short while ago, several projects related to the development of West Bengal were either inaugurated or had their foundation stones laid. New rail services have been gifted to West Bengal. These projects will make travel easier for the people here and will also simplify trade and business. The facilities created here for train maintenance will provide new opportunities for the youth of Bengal.

From this holy land of Bengal, another major step has been taken today towards the modernisation of Indian Railways. Today marks the commencement of Vande Bharat Sleeper trains in India. These new Vande Bharat Sleeper trains will make the long journeys of our countrymen more comfortable, grander and memorable. What should the trains of a 'Developed India' (Viksit Bharat) look like? It is clearly visible in this Vande Bharat Sleeper train. A little while ago, at Malda station, I was talking to some passengers; everyone was saying that sitting in this train gave them a wonderful sense of joy. We used to look at photos and videos of foreign trains and wished that such trains existed in India. Today, we are seeing that dream turn into reality. I have noticed lately that foreigners are making videos of India's metros and trains to tell the world about the revolution taking place in Indian Railways. This Vande Bharat train is 'Made in India'; the sweat of us Indians has gone into making it. This first Vande Bharat Sleeper train of the country connects the land of Maa Kali with the land of Maa Kamakhya. In the coming times, this modern train will be expanded across the entire country. I congratulate Bengal, Assam and the whole country on this modern sleeper train.

Today, Indian Railways is becoming modern, it is also becoming self-reliant

Today, Indian Railways is undergoing a phase of transformation. Railways are being electrified and railway stations are becoming modern. Today, more than 150 Vande Bharat trains are running across the country, including West Bengal. Along with this, a complete network of modern and high-speed trains is being built and its biggest beneficiaries are the poor and middle-class families of Bengal.

Today, while Indian Railways is becoming modern, it is also becoming self-reliant (Aatma-nirbhar). India's rail engines, rail coaches and metro coaches are becoming the identity of India's technology. Today, we are manufacturing more locomotives than America and Europe. We export passenger trains and metro train coaches to many countries around the world. All of this significantly benefits our economy and provides employment to our youth.

Connecting India is our priority; reducing distances is our mission and this is evident in today's programme as well. Once again, my best wishes to all of you for these projects.

Vande Bharat Sleeper Train Becomes a Hit Among Passengers: Tickets for the Vande Bharat Sleeper's inaugural commercial service between Kamakhya and Howrah were snapped up across all classes within a day of reservations opening on 19th January, 2026, marking a landmark response from passengers. The swift sell-out vividly demonstrates public enthusiasm for the train's premium amenities and modern features, reinforcing Indian Railways' successful push towards a contemporary, passenger-focused travel experience. The train commenced its maiden commercial journey with effect from 22nd January, 2026, from Kamakhya and from 23rd January, 2026, from Howrah.

Vande Bharat Sleeper Train

Set to Revolutionise Long-Distance Travel

The introduction of the Vande Bharat Sleeper on this route reflects Indian Railways' continued focus on modern, passenger-centric services. It marks a step towards a future where train travel combines speed, comfort and safety, making railways a preferred choice for long-distance journeys across the country.

World-Class Amenities for Passenger Comfort

Designed specifically for long-distance journeys, the Vande Bharat Sleeper places passenger comfort at the core of its design. The train comprises 16 modern coaches with a total capacity of 823 passengers, offering a seamless blend of speed, space and comfort.

Its advanced aerodynamic design reduces air resistance, ensuring a stable and smooth ride even at high speeds. Capable of operating at speeds of up to 180 km/h, the train significantly cuts travel time while delivering a quiet and premium travel experience.

Ergonomically designed sleeping berths provide better body support, making overnight journeys more restful. Automatic doors with vestibules between coaches ensure safe and convenient movement within the train. An advanced suspension system further enhances ride quality by minimizing jerks and vibrations, ensuring a calm and fatigue-free journey.

Vande Bharat Sleeper trains also feature ample and scrupulously designed luggage zones, with overhead racks and under-berth storage for smaller parcels and allocated areas near coach ingress for larger suitcases, sustaining uncluttered and commodious interiors. Crafted for extended travel, the train incorporates ergonomic sleeping berths, USB charging facilities and robust security mechanisms. Provisions for Divyangjan-accessible areas, modular catering modules and advanced fire-prevention apparatus further elevate passenger convenience, delivering a safe, efficient and avant-garde overnight journey.

Spotless, Hygienic and Passenger-Centric Travel

High standards of cleanliness and hygiene have been integrated into the Vande Bharat Sleeper experience. The train is equipped with modern toilets and advanced disinfectant technology, helping maintain superior sanitation levels throughout the journey. This ensures a clean,



safe and health-friendly environment, especially crucial for long overnight travel.

Affordable Premium Travel

Among its defining features, the Vande Bharat Sleeper offers superior cost-effectiveness vis-à-vis flying. The suggested pricing is calibrated to deliver first-class comfort at significantly reduced expenditure compared to airlines.

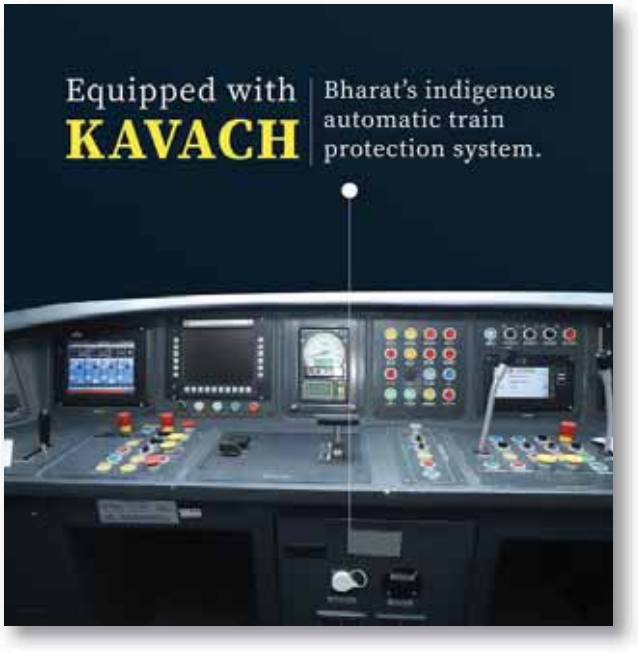
The indicative fares are approximately ₹2300 for 3 AC, ₹3000 for 2 AC and ₹3600 for First AC. These fares make the Vande Bharat Sleeper an attractive option that combines affordability with high-quality amenities and services.

Culinary Luxury in Transit

Passengers will additionally savour superior onboard catering facilities, rendering long overnight journeys both comfortable and unencumbered. Passengers on the Vande Bharat Sleeper train will enjoy region-specific culinary offerings during their journey. Trains originating from Guwahati will feature authentic Assamese cuisine, while those starting from Kolkata will serve traditional Bengali delicacies, ensuring a delightful and culturally rich dining experience on board.

Staff Support, Seamless Operations

The Vande Bharat Sleeper also brings significant improvements for railway staff. For Loco Pilots, the train is equipped with ergonomically designed driver cabins that reduce strain and fatigue during long duty hours, along with dedicated, well-equipped toilets to ensure hygiene and convenience.



For onboard staff such as TTEs and pantry personnel, dedicated cabins and compartments have been provided, along with improved berths and amenities that allow proper rest during duty hours, contributing to better efficiency, alertness and overall service quality.

Safety Powered by Indigenous Technology

Safety remains a top priority. The Vande Bharat Sleeper is equipped with the indigenous Kavach automatic train protection system, which plays a crucial role in preventing collisions and ensuring safe train operations. Automatic Doors The train is also equipped with features such as automatic doors, improved fire safety mechanisms, disinfectant technology and CCTV surveillance in all coaches. An advanced emergency talk-back system enables passengers to directly communicate with the crew in case of emergencies, ensuring prompt assistance. These systems together establish new benchmarks in rail safety, giving passengers complete peace of mind.

Punctuality and Reliability

The train's high-speed capabilities, coupled with advanced control systems and optimised operational efficiency, guarantee heightened punctuality and dependability. Rapid acceleration and deceleration curtail station dwell times, ensuring long-haul overnight journeys remain precise and reliable.

Future-Ready Rail Travel

The Vande Bharat Sleeper sets a new benchmark for overnight rail travel with a contemporary, passenger-first design. Ergonomically designed seats and berths ensure enhanced comfort during long journeys, while optimised luggage arrangements, region-specific onboard cuisine and improved facilities for onboard staff and Loco Pilots help reduce fatigue and ensure seamless service. Collectively, these innovations illustrate a future-ready vision of rail travel, where thoughtful design, advanced technology and operational efficiency combine to elevate the overall travel experience.■

Prime Minister Flags off Three Amrit Bharat Express Trains



The Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off three Amrit Bharat Express trains on 18th Janurary, 2026 from Singur, Hooghly district, West Bengal.

- **Kolkata (Howrah) – Anand Vihar Terminal**
- **Kolkata (Sealdah) – Banaras**
- **Kolkata (Santragachi) – Tambaram.**

The Prime Minister also inaugurated the Jayrambati-Barogopinathpur-Maynapur New Railway Line. This line is a key part of the Tarakeswar-Bishnupur New Railway Line Project. Along with a new train service between Maynapur and Jayrambati, with a stop at Barogopinathpur, will also be flagged off. This will provide direct rail connectivity to the residents of Bankura district, making travel more affordable and convenient for daily commuters, students and pilgrims.■



Dignitaries including Minister of State for Railways Ravneet Singh, Chairman and CEO of the Railway Board Satish Kumar, and General Manager of South Eastern Railway Anil Kumar Mishra at Santragachi Station on 18th January, 2026 during the inauguration of the Santragachi–Tambaram, Howrah–Anand Vihar and Sealdah–Banaras Amrit Bharat Express trains

PM Flags off Four New Train Services from Thiruvananthapuram

Strengthening rail connectivity in southern India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off four new train services at Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, on 23rd January, 2026. The newly launched services include three Amrit Bharat Express trains and one passenger train. The services

- **Nagercoil–Mangaluru**
- **Thiruvananthapuram–Tambaram**
- **Thiruvananthapuram–Charlapalli**
- **Thrissur–Guruvayur Passenger Train**

The introduction of these services is expected to significantly enhance long-distance and regional rail connectivity across Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Passengers will benefit from more affordable, safe and time-efficient travel options. Improved rail links are also anticipated to boost tourism, trade, education, employment and cultural exchange across the region.

Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister said that the flagging off of Amrit Bharat Express



PM Narendra Modi flagging off the new train services at Thiruvananthapuram. Also present on the occasion were CM Pinarayi Vijayan, Kerala Governor Rajendra Arlekar, Union Ministers V. Somanna, George Kurian and other dignitaries

trains has further strengthened rail connectivity in Kerala, improving travel convenience and supporting the growth of tourism. He also noted that the new passenger train between Thrissur and Guruvayur will make travel easier for pilgrims visiting the famous temple town.■

Financial Year 2026-27

Railways Receives A Record Capital Expenditure of

₹2,93,030 crore

Seven New High-Speed Corridors across India

New Dedicated Freight Corridor Announced between Dankuni (WB) and Surat to Strengthen East–West Trade

- **Seven New High-Speed Corridors Across India Will Bring Top Indian Cities Closer; South High-Speed Diamond to Benefit Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry.**
- **High-Speed Rail Corridors Spanning about 4000 km Expected To Attract Around ₹16 Lakh Crore Investment.**
- **2052 km Long New Dedicated Freight Corridor Announced Between Dankuni (WB) and Surat to Strengthen East–West Trade.**
- **With Nearly ₹1.20 Lakh Crore Earmarked, Safety Remains the Top Priority.**
- **Designed and Developed in India Propulsion Systems being Delivered to Top Countries Including USA, Germany, France, Switzerland and Spain.**

Ashwini Vaishnaw
Minister of Railways



Several major steps have been taken in the budget to strengthen infrastructure. Dedicated Freight Corridor, expansion of waterways across the country, high-speed rail corridor, special focus on the development of Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities.

Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

Indian Railways is charting a course towards rapid and sustained expansion. Anchored by a substantial Union Budget allocation of ₹2,78,000 crore this year, Indian Railways is channelising its expenditure into high-speed connectivity, freight movement, and safety-focused infrastructure.



MR Ashwini Vaishnaw interacting with the media on post-Budget rail announcements; other Union ministers were present during the briefing

A record capital expenditure of ₹2,93,030 crore has been planned for Indian Railways in the Union Budget 2026-27. This is the highest-ever capital expenditure (capex) as well as the highest allocation for Indian Railways.

The allocation underscores the government's continued focus on strengthening railway infrastructure, expanding capacity and enhancing passenger safety. It reflects the emphasis on leveraging rail infrastructure as a key driver of economic growth and logistics efficiency. The sustained investment push aims to improve freight movement, reduce logistics costs, decongest high-density corridors and enhance the passenger experience through modern trains and redeveloped stations.

As part of its long-term vision, the government has announced the development of seven high-speed rail corridors between cities as 'growth connectors' to promote environmentally sustainable passenger transport systems. These corridors include Mumbai–Pune, Pune–Hyderabad, Hyderabad–Bengaluru, Hyderabad–Chennai, Chennai–Bengaluru, Delhi–Varanasi and Varanasi–Siliguri. The proposed corridors are expected to significantly reduce inter-city travel time and facilitate seamless, multimodal movement of passengers.

With the announcement of the new corridors, the rail-based transportation ecosystem is expected to undergo a paradigm shift. In South India, the Chennai–Bengaluru–Hyderabad high-speed network will form a South High-Speed Triangle (or Diamond), connecting major economic and IT hubs. Union Minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting, and Electronics & Information Technology, Ashwini Vaishnaw, addressing a press conference at Rail Bhawan on 1st February, 2026, said that travel times will significantly reduce.

The Minister said that Chennai–Bengaluru will take about 1 hour 13 minutes, Bengaluru–Hyderabad around 2 hours, and Chennai–Hyderabad around 2 hours 55 minutes. This network is expected to serve as a powerful growth multiplier for Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry, significantly boosting regional development.

In western and central India, the upcoming Mumbai-Pune high-speed corridor will reduce travel time to around 48 minutes, effectively integrating the two major urban centres. Further connectivity from Pune to Hyderabad in around 1



hour 55 minutes, and onward links to southern hubs, will create a continuous high-speed spine across regions, benefiting passengers and regional economies alike.

In northern and eastern India, the Delhi-Varanasi high-speed corridor will enable travel in around 3 hours 50 minutes. Further, the high-speed rail corridor from Varanasi via Patna to Siliguri in West Bengal will enable travel between Varanasi and Siliguri in about 2 hours and 55 minutes. This connectivity is expected to create a new economic corridor across the belt spanning Delhi, UP, Bihar and West Bengal, significantly boosting regional development and economic activity.

The Minister said that, together, the seven high-speed corridors span nearly 4,000 km and are expected to attract investments of approximately ₹16 lakh crore, positioning Indian Railways as a central pillar of future mobility.

In a major boost to freight movement and logistics efficiency, the Union Budget also proposes a new Dedicated Freight Corridor connecting Dankuni in West Bengal with Surat in Gujarat, passing through Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. This 2,052 km corridor will integrate with the existing Western Dedicated Freight Corridor, enabling seamless movement of goods to ports along the west coast. The Union Minister noted that the existing Eastern and Western DFCs are already operating at near-saturation levels, handling around 400 freight trains daily, necessitating additional corridors to meet future demand.





This East–West corridor will strengthen seamless trade flows across regions, decongest existing rail networks and enhance the efficiency of goods transportation, thereby supporting industrial growth and supply chains.

The Minister highlighted that safety remains the top priority, with nearly ₹1.20 lakh crore earmarked exclusively for safety-related works. The Union Minister noted that sustained investments over the years have already yielded results, with railway accidents reduced by nearly 95%. He stated that the government is now intensifying efforts to further strengthen safety outcomes. The focus areas include enhanced track, locomotive, wagon and coach maintenance, rapid deployment of the Kavach Automatic Train Protection system, installation of CCTV cameras, upgradation of overhead electrical (OHE) systems, station redevelopment, and improved customer care and passenger facilities.

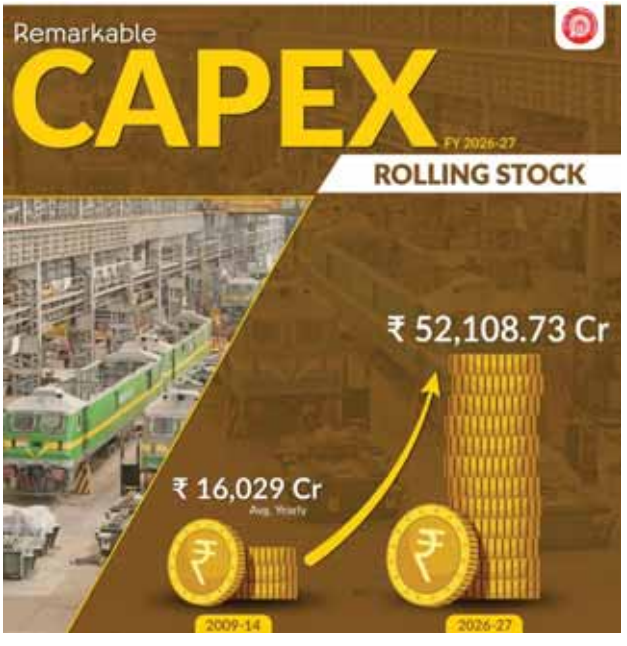
The Minister said that propulsion systems are the most critical component of railway technology, and that propulsion systems designed and manufactured in India are now being exported to the leading countries, including the USA, Switzerland, Germany, France and Spain.

The Minister also highlighted record achievements in infrastructure creation, including construction of 35,000 km of new tracks, 47,000 km of electrification, and electrification coverage exceeding 99.5% of the broad-gauge network. He said the manufacturing of Vande Bharat sleeper and chair car trains, Amrit Bharat and Namo Bharat trains, along with record induction



of wagons, is progressing at an unprecedented pace. Emphasising sustainability, The Minister stated that rail transport is nearly 95% less polluting than road transport, aligning closely with the government's environmental and climate commitments and reflecting the Prime Minister's vision of railways as a green mode of mass transport.

The record allocation reinforces the role of Indian Railways as a backbone of national development, economic growth and inclusive connectivity. With the initiatives outlined in Union Budget 2026-27, Indian Railways is poised to play a decisive role in nation-building by delivering faster connectivity, efficient logistics and resilient infrastructure in line with the vision of Viksit Bharat.■



Railways Crosses 80% CAPEX Utilisation in 3rd Quarter

Indian Railways is undergoing a historic transformation, delivering faster, safer and globally competitive rail travel at affordable costs while reinforcing its role as a key driver of national connectivity. Closely aligned with the vision of a modern, integrated India, this evolution is underpinned by substantial Gross Budgetary Support (GBS) outlays for 2025-26, reflecting robust financial stewardship, accelerated infrastructure development and a strong emphasis on service quality.

As of the end of December 2025, Indian Railways has spent 80.54%, i.e., ₹2,03,138 crore of the total GBS of ₹2,52,200 crore. This represents a 6.54% increase in GBS utilisation compared to the same period last year (December, 2024). The expenditure has primarily focused on safety measures, capacity enhancement, infrastructure modernisation and passenger amenities.

In the category of safety-related works, 84% of the allocated funds have been utilised. For capacity augmentation, out of ₹1,09,238 crore allocated, ₹76,048 crore (69%) has been expended. Customer amenities have seen 80% utilisation, with expenditure amounting to ₹9575 crore till December, 2025.

The results of consistent capital expenditure (CAPEX) over the last decade are evident in 164 Vande Bharat train services, more than 30 Amrit Bharat train services, the implementation of the Kavach automatic train protection system, over 99% electrification of the broad-gauge network and extensive works covering new lines, gauge conversion, track doubling, traffic facilities, investments in PSUs and metropolitan transport systems. These initiatives have significantly improved speed, safety and passenger comfort, while keeping rail travel affordable. With the Vande Bharat Sleeper train set for inauguration shortly, Indian Railways is poised to transform long-distance rail travel.

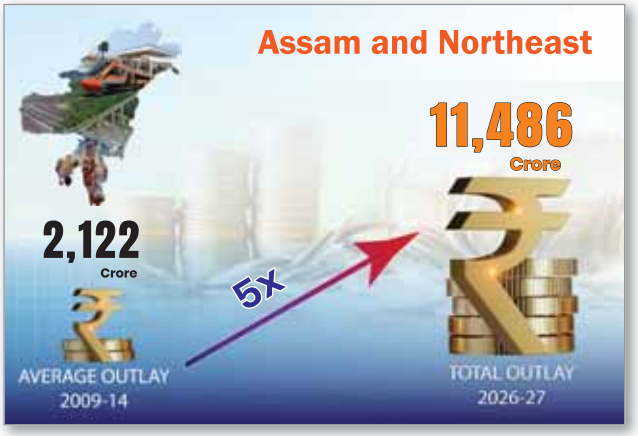
These trends indicate that the Ministry of Railways' GBS expenditure plan is on track, with infrastructural works being executed expeditiously. They also suggest that the targets for FY 2025-26 are likely to be fully achieved.■





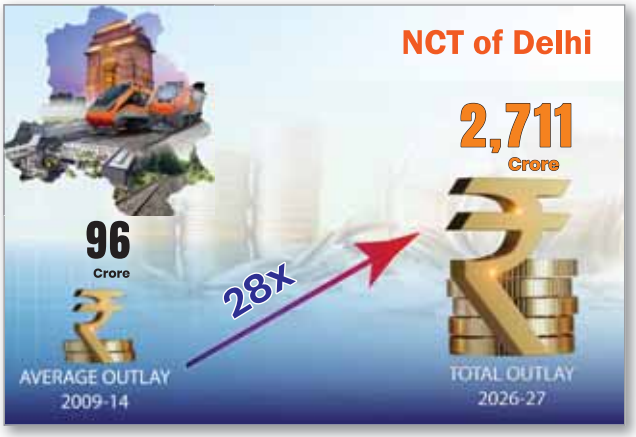
State-wise Budget Allocation














Haryana
3,566
Crore
315
Crore
11x
AVERAGE OUTLAY
2009-14
TOTAL OUTLAY
2026-27


Himachal Pradesh
2,911
Crore
108
Crore
27x
AVERAGE OUTLAY
2009-14
TOTAL OUTLAY
2026-27


Jharkhand
7,536
Crore
457
Crore
16x
AVERAGE OUTLAY
2009-14
TOTAL OUTLAY
2026-27


Karnataka
7,748
Crore
835
Crore
9x
AVERAGE OUTLAY
2009-14
TOTAL OUTLAY
2026-27

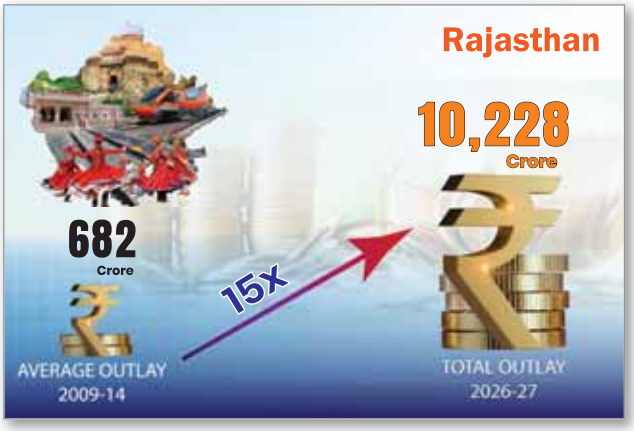

Kerala
3,795
Crore
372
Crore
10x
AVERAGE OUTLAY
2009-14
TOTAL OUTLAY
2026-27

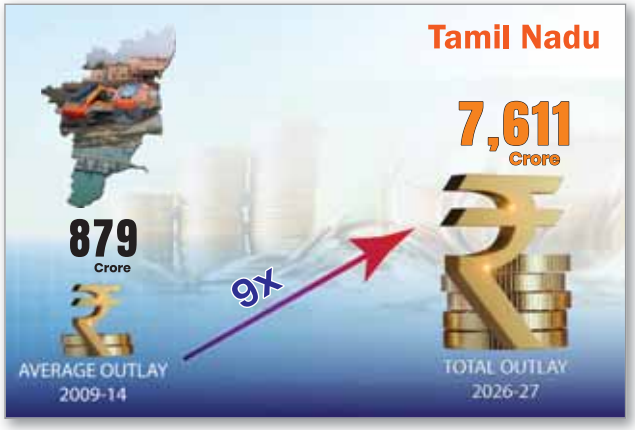

Madhya Pradesh
15,188
Crore
632
Crore
24x
AVERAGE OUTLAY
2009-14
TOTAL OUTLAY
2026-27


Maharashtra
23,926
Crore
1,171
Crore
20x
AVERAGE OUTLAY
2009-14
TOTAL OUTLAY
2026-27

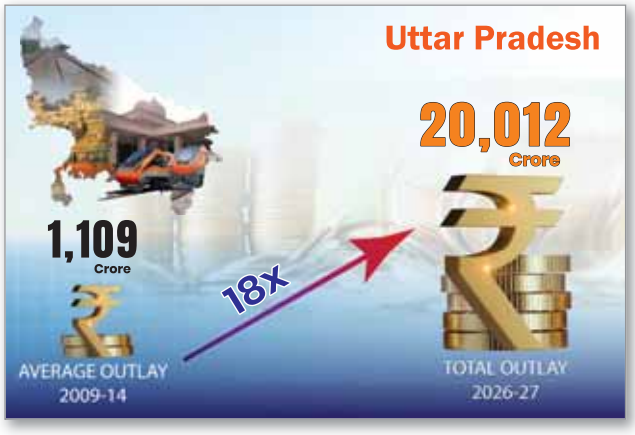

Odisha
10,928
Crore
838
Crore
13x
AVERAGE OUTLAY
2009-14
TOTAL OUTLAY
2026-27

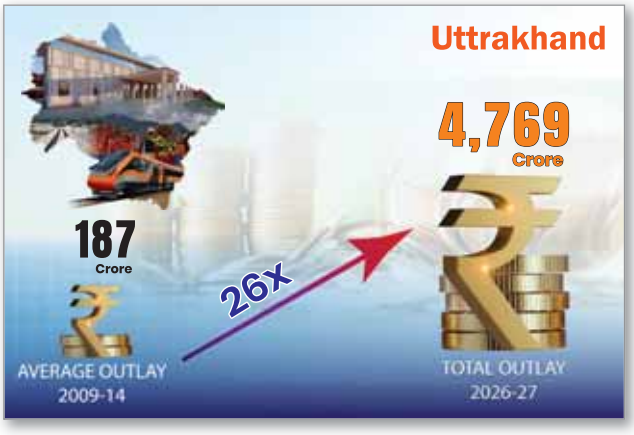

Punjab
225
Crore
AVERAGE OUTLAY
2009-14
25x
5,673
Crore
TOTAL OUTLAY
2026-27

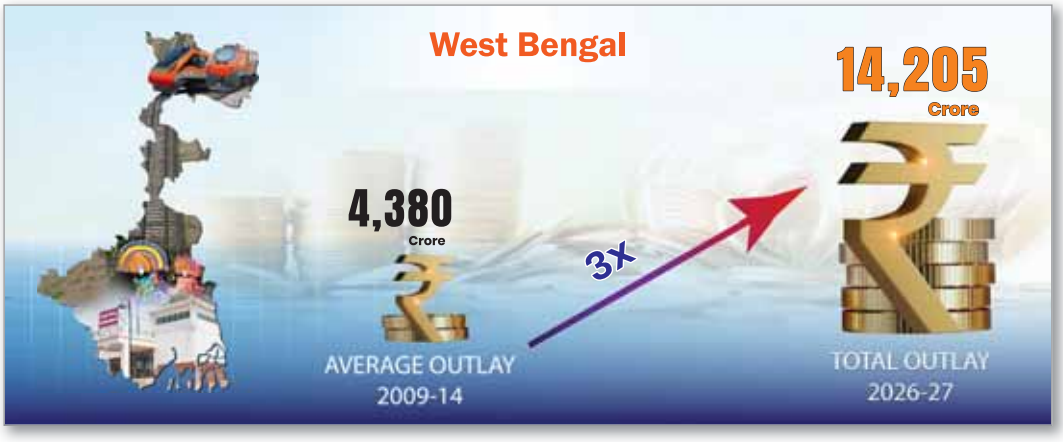

Rajasthan
682
Crore
AVERAGE OUTLAY
2009-14
15x
10,228
Crore
TOTAL OUTLAY
2026-27


Tamil Nadu
879
Crore
AVERAGE OUTLAY
2009-14
9x
7,611
Crore
TOTAL OUTLAY
2026-27


Telangana
886
Crore
AVERAGE OUTLAY
2009-14
6x
5,454
Crore
TOTAL OUTLAY
2026-27


Uttar Pradesh
1,109
Crore
AVERAGE OUTLAY
2009-14
18x
20,012
Crore
TOTAL OUTLAY
2026-27


Uttrakhand
187
Crore
AVERAGE OUTLAY
2009-14
26x
4,769
Crore
TOTAL OUTLAY
2026-27


West Bengal
4,380
Crore
AVERAGE OUTLAY
2009-14
3x
14,205
Crore
TOTAL OUTLAY
2026-27

Economic Survey 2025-26

Indian Railways

Indian Railways continue to play a pivotal role in India's infrastructure landscape by expanding network capacity, modernising assets and strengthening multimodal connectivity. As of March 2025, the rail network has expanded to 69,439 Rkm. During FY26, it is targeted to extend the network further by 3500 km. Electrification has reached 99.1% of the network by October 2025. 11 Sustained investments have enabled faster network expansion, with commissioning rates more than doubling in the post 2014 period compared to the previous decade.





A defining feature of recent years has been the record capital expenditure on railway infrastructure, with a focus on new lines, doubling and multi-tracking, rolling stock augmentation, signalling and safety-related works. In FY26 (BE), capital outlay has been maintained at historically high levels, to accelerate capacity creation in a time bound manner.

Railways have also emerged as a backbone of India's freight and energy logistics, supporting coal movement, industrial supply chains and containerised traffic through dedicated corridors, modern terminals and first-mile connectivity projects. Parallel investments in stations, signalling, telecom and digital systems are improving network reliability, safety and user experience.

Key Infrastructure Initiatives in the Railways Sector

- **Economic Railway Corridors (PM GatiShakti):** Three corridor programmes—Energy, Mineral & Cement; Port Connectivity; and High Traffic Density routes—are being implemented to strengthen multimodal connectivity and logistics efficiency. 434 projects with an outlay of ₹11.17 lakh crore have been identified under three corridors and mapped on the PM GatiShakti portal. Of these, 122 projects covering 12,150 km have been sanctioned and 198 projects spanning 19,779 km are under different stages of appraisal.



Major Ongoing Projects:

- **Mumbai–Ahmedabad High Speed Rail:** Over 55% physical progress has been achieved as on October 2025, with land acquisition completed and most civil packages awarded, marking a major step towards introducing high speed rail infrastructure in India.
- **Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFCs):** About 2741 km (96.4%) of the 2843 km DFC network has been commissioned as of October 2025, with the Eastern DFC (1,337 km) fully completed and 1404 km of the 1506 km Western DFC completed.

These corridors are easing congestion on the passenger network, significantly reducing freight transit times and contributing to lowering logistics costs.

- **Station Redevelopment:** Under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, 1337 stations have been identified for phased redevelopment, with works completed at select stations and progress underway across the country to improve capacity, accessibility and multimodal integration. Further, 15 stations have been identified to develop/redevelop on PPP mode.
- **Safety and Technology Upgradation:** Large-scale deployment of Kavach [Advance Train Protection (ATP) System], electronic interlocking, automatic block signalling and track renewal are enhancing network safety and throughput.
- **Track upgradation:** More than 78% of railway tracks have been upgraded for sectional speed of 110 kmph and above.
- **Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs):** 18 projects worth ₹16,636 crore have been completed and seven projects worth ₹16,334 crore are under implementation as on September 2025.

Outlook: Indian Railways is undergoing a transformation, driven by sustained capital investment, rapid network expansion, near-universal electrification and a corridor-based approach to capacity creation. Continued focus on dedicated freight corridors, economic rail corridors under PM Gati Shakti and modern signalling and station infrastructure is improving throughput, reliability and multimodal integration. These infrastructure-led initiatives will be central for reducing logistics costs and strengthening connectivity.

Railway Freight Services



Rail freight services, a 50 percent cost-effective cargo route compared to road transport, continue to play a critical role in supporting the bulk and long-distance movement of goods essential for core industrial activity. In FY25, freight loading by Indian Railways exceeded 1.6 billion tonnes, witnessing a slight expansion over FY24. However, it remains 12.5 percent higher than the average of FY21-FY24, signalling a healthy underlying momentum. This momentum has been sustained into FY26, with freight loading growing by 3.3 percent and reaching about 1,215 million tonnes (MT) during April-December. Growth was supported by strong demand from core sectors such as coal (601 MT), iron ore (138 MT), cement (109 MT), container traffic (71 MT), pig iron and finished steel (56 MT), fertilisers (52 MT), mineral oil (38 MT), foodgrains (36 MT), raw materials for steel plants (approximately 23 MT) and other goods (91 MT).

Railways' operational efficiency has also improved, with average daily freight loading rising from 4.2 MT in 2024 to about 4.4 MT in 2025. This has been supported by capacity augmentation through the commissioning of new tracks and the expansion of Dedicated Freight Corridors, which have eased congestion and increased movement speeds. Policy measures, including bulk cement terminals, rationalised freight rates for containerised cement movement and wider adoption of digital platforms such as the Freight Operation Information System, have further strengthened bulk handling and operational efficiency. ■

Bullet Train Project

Achieves Second Mountain Tunnel Breakthrough in Palghar

Measuring 454 metre in length and 14.4 metre in width, the MT-6 reflects the pace of tunnelling progress achieved within approximately one month



Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announcing from Rail Bhawan, New Delhi, the successful breakthrough of the second mountain tunnel. Also present on the occasion were Palghar MP Dr. Hemant Vishnu Savara and Railway Board Chairman & CEO Satish Kumar

Reinforcing India's progress towards world-class high-speed rail infrastructure, the Union Minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting, and Electronics & Information Technology, Ashwini Vaishnaw, announced a significant milestone in the Bullet Train Project with the breakthrough of the second mountain tunnel in Palghar, Maharashtra, on 3rd February, 2026. The 454 metre-long and 14.4 metre-wide tunnel is designed to support both up and down tracks for the Mumbai–Ahmedabad Bullet Train project.

This is the second mountain tunnel breakthrough in Palghar district within a span of one month for the Bullet Train project, the first being MT-5 near Saphale on 2nd January, 2026.

The mountain tunnel (MT-6) was excavated from both ends using the New Austrian Tunnelling Method (NATM), a cutting-edge drill-and-controlled-blast method. The excavation was completed within 12 months. A mountain tunnel breakthrough marks a key engineering milestone when excavation teams digging from opposite ends of the tunnel finally meet at the centre, forming a continuous passage through the mountain.

The Minister congratulated the entire high-speed rail team for their remarkable progress. He said the pace at which the team is working has instilled new confidence in the country. The project is drawing global attention and appreciation due to several new innovations in construction and technology. He highlighted that many advanced construction technologies and large machines being used for the project are manufactured in India.

The Union Minister stated that the Gujarat section of the Bullet Train project is expected to begin commercial operations next year. He added that high-speed rail operations are expected to extend up to Thane by 2028, with the corridor reaching Mumbai by 2029.

Dr. Hemant Vishnu Savara, Lok Sabha Member of Parliament from the Palghar constituency, was also present on the occasion. He expressed gratitude to Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw for the high-speed tunnel breakthrough in Palghar. He highlighted the district's rapid development through several key railway projects, including the high-speed rail corridor, the Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC), and the upcoming Vadhvan Port. He emphasized that railway investment in Maharashtra has increased significantly since 2014, resulting in faster project completion and improved services.

The NATM is favoured for its flexibility in complex geological conditions like those in Palghar district and irregular tunnel shapes, where tunnel boring machines are not that suitable. This process does not require very heavy machinery and allows real-time adaptation using shotcreting, rock bolts and lattice girders. Workers' safety inside the tunnel was ensured using various geotechnical instruments, real-time monitoring, efficient fire safety measures, proper ventilation, and controlled access arrangements.

In Maharashtra, construction work is progressing rapidly on multiple fronts. The project's longest river bridge on the Vaitarna river has reached pier level, apart from foundation-level work on other major rivers like Ulhas and Jagani. Work is also progressing rapidly on all four stations, major national and state highway crossings using long-span steel bridges, and a 21 km long tunnel between Bandra Kurla Complex and Shilphata. A total of seven mountain tunnels are under progress in Palghar district in Maharashtra.

Mountain Tunnel no.	Length	% completion	Remarks
MT-1	0.820	16%	
MT-2	0.228	Preparatory works underway	
MT-3	1.403	41%	
MT-4	1.260	32%	
MT-5	1.480	57%	Breakthrough achieved on 2nd Jan, 2026
MT-6	0.454	47%	Breakthrough achieved on 3rd Feb, 2026
MT-7	0.417	29%	

The MAHSR project spans approximately 508 kilometres, covering 352 km in Gujarat and Dadra & Nagar Haveli, and 156 km in Maharashtra. As on 27th January, 2026, around 334 km of viaducts, 17 river bridges, and 12 major crossings over national highways, railways, and other infrastructure have been completed. Track-laying and electrification works have picked up pace in the Gujarat section of the project.■



52 Reforms in Weeks

Railways Sharpens Focus on Safety, AI & Tech, Talent and Passenger Experience



MR Ashwini Vaishnaw chairing a review meeting with senior railway officials. He was accompanied by Union MoS for Railways V. Somanna and Ravneet Singh

Union Minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting and Electronics & Information Technology, Ashwini Vaishnaw, held a meeting with Union MoS V. Somanna and Union MoS Ravneet Singh, along with Railway Board Chairman & CEO, Satish Kumar and senior officials, at Rail Bhawan, New Delhi on 8th January, 2026.

In the meeting, it was decided to bring major reforms in Railways, targeting 52 reforms this year. The meeting highlighted the spirit of 'New Year, New Resolutions' and the goal of implementing significant reforms in Railways.

52 Reforms in 52 Weeks—Systemic improvements in efficiency, governance and service delivery.

Focus on Safety—Consequential train accidents reduced by approximately 90% (from 135 in 2014-15 to 11 in 2025-26); aiming to bring the number down to a single digit.

AI & Tech Boost—Accelerating the use of AI and advanced technology for safety, maintenance and operations.

Talent & Training Revamp—Exploring innovative methods for talent management and skill development of employees.

Food & Catering Upgrade—Major reforms to improve food quality, catering and onboard services.

Ministers of State for Railways, Chairman and CEO and senior officials shared their on-ground experiences. The meeting reviewed infrastructure development, maintenance and capacity enhancement initiatives. The Railway Ministry reaffirmed its commitment to reforms, safety, technological progress and passenger-focused growth.■

MR Confers Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar on 100 Officials and Awards 25 Shields to Top Zones

Calling for Indian Railways to move to a new level for Viksit Bharat by 2047, the Minister also unveiled a six-point resolution roadmap.



MR Ashwini Vaishnaw felicitating railway staff at the Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar ceremony. Also present on the dais are MoSR V. Somanna and Railway Board Chairman and CEO Satish Kumar

The Union Minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting and Electronics & Information Technology, Ashwini Vaishnaw, conferred the 70th Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar on 100 railway officials and awarded 25 Shields to the best-performing Zones in different categories at the India International Convention & Expo Centre (Yashobhoomi), Dwarka, New Delhi, on 9th January, 2026. The ceremony was graced by the Minister of State for Railways & Jal Shakti, V. Somanna, the Chairman & CEO of the Railway Board, Satish Kumar, along with Members of the Railway Board and General Managers of various Railway Zones and production units.

Addressing the gathering at the Puraskar, Minister of Railways said that Indian Railways (IR) must move to an entirely new level to realise the vision of 'Viksit Bharat, Viksit Railways' by 2047. Congratulating railway employees for their dedication, he said their collective efforts have enabled the Railways to overcome long-standing challenges, expand capacity, improve efficiency and deliver major infrastructure and operational milestones.

MR added that extensive track construction has led to a significant increase in railway capacity. He noted that special trains were operated during all major rush seasons such as Diwali-Chhath, Christmas and the summer period, ensuring smoother travel for passengers and that a new benchmark was set in the previous year.

The Minister said that Indian Railways has embarked on an ambitious reform roadmap for 2026 titled '52 weeks, 52 reforms', under which one major reform will be implemented every week across key functional areas such as customer service, maintenance, production, quality management, health systems and operations. He said series of structured workshops are being conducted to redefine standards, identify bottlenecks and set clear, time-bound action plans, with active participation from officers across departments.

MR outlined six core resolutions that will guide Indian Railways in the coming phase:

First, a decisive push for systemic reforms, with time-bound changes across customer service, maintenance, production, quality and health systems, driven by accountability and execution.

Second, deep and widespread adoption of technology, innovation and Artificial Intelligence, including new-generation rolling stock, advanced track systems, modern signalling and smarter maintenance practices to improve reliability and productivity.

Third, a fundamental upgrade of maintenance standards, acknowledging that moving away from outdated practices may cause short-term discomfort but is essential for long-term safety and performance.

Fourth, a sharp and uncompromising focus on safety, with the aim of dramatically reducing consequential accidents through better training, technology deployment, disciplined operations and daily monitoring at all levels of leadership.

Fifth, transforming training and talent development, making continuous skill upgradation mandatory, linking training to career progression and using modern tools such as simulators and digital platforms to build a highly competent workforce.

Sixth, the complete eradication of the colonial mindset, urging officials to embrace openness to new ideas, empower younger officers and field staff, promote Indian solutions and take pride in Made-in-India achievements that are now being accepted globally.

MR also highlighted the importance of engaging startups and innovators, encouraging railway employees to contribute reform ideas and ensuring that successful innovations are scaled across the network. Drawing parallels with major national reforms, he said IR must show similar courage and confidence in change. He said that with a young workforce, transparent systems and a reform-oriented mindset, IR is well positioned to become a global benchmark and a key pillar in India's journey towards becoming a developed nation by 2047.

Addressing the gathering, Somanna congratulated railway employees, describing IR as one of the world's largest service organisations and crediting the Rail Parivar for ensuring safe and comfortable travel for millions every day.

He noted that rail connectivity has expanded to regions such as Jammu & Kashmir and the North-East, citing major engineering achievements that have strengthened national integration. He also referred to Amrit Bharat and Namo Bharat trains for improved connectivity and said the upcoming Vande Bharat Sleeper will enhance long-distance travel.

Highlighting progress in railway electrification and environmental sustainability, Somanna said IR is moving towards greener operations. Sharing his experience from field visits, he praised the dedication and commitment of railway staff at all levels, calling them the backbone of the organisation.

In his address, Satish Kumar said that IR has undergone rapid transformation, emerging as a modern, safe and passenger-centric organisation. Emphasising that safety remains the highest priority, he spoke about continuous improvements through modern signalling systems, electronic interlocking, elimination of unmanned level crossings, enhanced track monitoring and related safety measures. On freight operations, he said IR is setting new benchmarks through door-to-door and multimodal logistics, contributing meaningfully to the nation's economic progress.

He also recalled the completion of a century of railway electrification, describing it as a proud milestone in the journey of IR, commemorated through special initiatives. Acknowledging railway employees as the "real heroes," he credited their discipline, dedication and service as the backbone of this transformation.

IR confers the Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar to its employees every year. These awards are given in two categories, the individual awards, as well as Shields presented to the best-performing Railway Zones. Individual awards serve as a platform to acknowledge and celebrate the dedication, hard work and exceptional contributions of railway personnel towards making the IR a more efficient, safe and passenger-friendly organisation. Shield awards in various categories are presented recognising their outstanding achievements and contributions to the overall performance of the IR.

On the occasion, a commemorative coin marking 100 years of electrification in Indian Railways was also launched







MR Ashwini Vaishnaw felicitating railway employees during the Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar ceremony. Also seen on the dais are MoS for Railways V. Somanna and Railway Board Chairman and CEO Satish Kumar.

It is noteworthy that on 3rd February, 1925, the first electric train ran between Victoria Terminus (now Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus) and Kurla Harbour. At present, nearly 99.5 percent of the broad-gauge rail network has been electrified, and the remaining work is progressing rapidly.

Minister of Railways along with Board Members

Presented the Shields to the Winners which were Received by General Managers and Senior Officers



Govind Ballabh Pant Shield
North Western and West Central Railway



Security Shield
East Central Railway



Sales Management Shield
West Central Railway



Coaching Maintenance Shield
East Coast Railway



Uttkrishta Gunavatta (PU) Shield
Integral Coach Factory, Chennai



Accounts & Finance Management Shield
Southern Railway



Environment & Cleanliness Shield
Southern Railway



Loco Maintenance Shield
Southern Railway



Wagon Maintenance Shield
North Western Railway



Running Room Shield
Abu Road Running Room, North Western Railway



Traffic Transportation Shield
South East Central Railway



Rail Madad Shield
South East Central Railway



Uttkrishta Gunavatta (Workshop) Shield
Carriage Repair Shop, Tirupati of South Central Railway and Motibagh Workshop, Nagpur of South East Central Railway



Telecommunication Efficiency Shield
North Central Railway



Signal Efficiency Shield
North Central & Central Railway



Stores Shield
Central Railway



Bridge Maintenance Shield
Central Railway



Civil Engineering Shield
Western & Central Railway



Civil Engineering Construction Shield
Central & Western Railway



Comprehensive Health Care Shield
Western Railway



NFR Shield
Western Railway



Track Maintenance Shield
Western Railway



Electrical Engineering Shield
Western Railway



Commercial Shield
Eastern Railway



Sarvottam Suraksha Shield
(Earlier Safety Shield)
Eastern Railway

Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar-2025: Category-wise Break-Up

New Innovations/processes/procedures leading to economies in expenditure, improvement in productivity, import substitution etc.

S. N.	Railway/ PU/ RB	Name of Officers	Designation
1	NWR	Shivlal Jaisingh Purohit	Senior Section Engineer
2	METRO	Saroj Bandyopadhyay	Senior Section Engineer
3	SWR	Biswanath Kumar	Senior Section Engineer
4	ICF	Poonardeep Singh	Works Manager
5	ER	Abhijit Ray	Deputy Chief Accounts Officer (Finance & Budget)
6	ER	Abhinav Bansal	Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer
7	RB	Parveen Mohan Sahai	Director
8	RB	Purushottam Kumar	Joint Director
9	CR	Manish Kumar	Deputy Chief Materials Manager
10	NWR	Megha Godara Dev	Deputy Chief Personnel Officer
11	RB	Amit Singh Mehra	Director
12	SR	Pramod R. P.	Chief Health and Malaria Inspector
13	NER	Dilip Kumar Gautam	Senior Section Engineer
14	NR	Pushkal Rai	Senior Section Engineer
15	NCR	Ashutosh Sharma	Sr. Divisional Finance Manager
16	PLW	Ramesh Kumar Koul	Dy. Chief Materials Manager
17	ER	Satish Kumar Pandey	Pointsman-B

Meritorious acts even in disregard to personal safety leading to protection of life and property on Railways.

S. N.	Railway/ PU/ RB	Name of Officers	Designation
18	SER	Prasenjit Das	Bridge Helper
19	NWR	Onkar	Constable
20	NR	Shubham Vaishya	Senior Assistant Loco Pilot
21	NWR	Mubarik Hussain Mansuri	Loco Pilot (Mail/ Express)
22	NCR	Sushmita	Assistant Loco Pilot
23	SR	Pawan Kumar	Track Maintainer-IV
24	ER	Abhishek Dutta	Loco Pilot (Passenger)
25	ECR	Ravi Ranjan	Loco Pilot (Goods)
26	ECR	Baiju Jaiswara	Train Manager (Mail/Express)
27	RB	Rajesh Lal	Assistant Security Commissioner
28	ER	Rajeev Ranjan	Loco Pilot (Passenger)
29	NCR	Parwat	Track Maintainer-I
30	WR	Ramprabesh Kumar	Loco Pilot (Goods)
31	SR	G. Subramani	Loco Pilot (Mail/ Express)
32	ECOR	Sakal Deo Rana	Loco Pilot Goods (Electrical)
33	SCR	Ch Mahesh Babu	Mail/Express Train Manager
34	CR	Praduman Kumar	Track Maintainer-IV
35	WR	Banti Kumar	Track Maintainer-IV
36	ER	Amar Kumar	Track Maintainer-IV
37	WCR	Piyush Sharma	Senior Section Engineer
38	NER	Bhagwan Sahai Meena	Station Superintendent
39	SR	M. Vani	Chief Commercial cum Reservation Supervisor

Special efforts made to increase earnings and to tackle ticketless travel, thefts, etc.

S. N.	Railway/ PU/ RB	Name of Officers	Designation
40	SECR	Dilip Singh	Senior Divisional Commercial Manager
41	SCR	Visharl Arjun Rg	Divisional Commercial Manager
42	ECR	Md. Tausif Ullah	Divisional Operations Manager
43	NWR	Monika Yadav	Divisional Commercial Manager
44	WR	Pintu Sharma	Senior Section Officer
45	CR	Hanumant Arun Wagh	Train Ticket Inspector
46	ER	Subhra Prakash Roy	Chief Commercial Inspector
47	ER	Amar Chaturvedi	Chief Commercial cum Reservation Supervisor
48	RB	Ranjeet Kumar	Chief Controller
49	RB	Rakesh Kumar Khatri	Assistant Director
50	ECR	Manish Kumar	Inspector (Executive)
51	CR	Sanjay Kumar Behera	Chief Enquiry Inspector
52	RB	Rajat Agarwal	Joint Director
53	SR	D.L. Ganesh	Senior Divisional Commercial Manager

Exemplary work done to improve operations, security and safety, better maintenance and utilization of assets.

S. N.	Railway/ PU/ RB	Name of Officers	Designation
54	SCR	Ramesh Kamulla	Divisional Signal and Telecommunication Engineer
55	ECR	Prabhash Kumar Prabhakar	Track Maintainer-II
56	NR	Jitender Kumar	Deputy Chief Safety Officer
57	WR	Anshul Bansal	Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer
58	SR	Ranjith K.P.	Senior Divisional Signal and Telecommunication Engineer
59	SR	C.Sandeep	Senior Section Engineer
60	SR	Vibin P.	Assistant/C&W
61	CR	Himanshu Ramdeo	Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer
62	NCR	Dhananjay Kumar Singh	Deputy Chief Mechanical Engineer
63	NCR	Krishna Shukla	Senior Divisional Operations Manager
64	SWR	Kesireddy Vamshi Krishna Reddy	Divisional Engineer
65	SER	Shramana Das	Technician Grade-III
66	SER	Sanjay Kumar Tiwary	Inspector (Executive)
67	ER	Sushil Kumar	Senior Section Engineer (Pway)
68	ECR	Subhash Kumar Pathak	Technician Grade-I
69	WR	Yogesh Kumar Sharma	Pointsman-B
70	NR	Devesh Sharma	Sr DME
71	SCR	G.R.A. Sravanthi	Junior Engineer (Workshop)
72	SR	S.Silambarasan	Track Maintainer-I

Completion of projects, etc. in record time.

S. N.	Railway/ PU/ RB	Name of Officers	Designation
73	NCR	Kush Gupta	Deputy Chief Signal and Telecommunication Engineer
74	NR	Indra Kumar	Senior Divisional Engineer
75	WR	Chirag Mittal	Deputy Chief Engineer
76	NR	Satwinder Kaur	Dy. Chief Signal and Telecommunication Engineer
77	ER	Kanchan Kumar Roy	Senior Section Engineer
78	ECR	Mayank Priyadarshi	Assistant Signal and Telecommunication Engineer
79	ER	Siddharth Raghuwanshi	Senior Section Engineer
80	SR	S. Nandhakumar	Senior Section Engineer
81	WR	Apurv Tiwari	Deputy Chief Signal and Telecommunication Engineer
82	ECR	Md. Ikramul Ansari	Senior Section Engineer
83	SECR	Saandhya Pradeep Choubey	Station Superintendent
84	ER	Narendra Kumar Ravi	Senior Section Engineer
85	SCR	Nelli Bhanu Surya Prakash	Deputy Chief Engineer
86	ECOR	S. Srinivasa Rao	Deputy Chief Signal and Telecommunication Engineer
87	SWR	K.Balasubramani	Chief Depot Material Supreintendent
88	RB	Ghanshyam	Director

Outstanding performance in the field of sports, leading to national/international recognition.

S. N.	Railway/ PU/ RB	Name of Officers	Designation
89	ECOR	Amit Rohidas	Assistant Sports Officer
90	SCR	S. Thirumalai Kumar	Chief Commercial cum Reservation Supervisor

Outstanding performance in any other field.

S. N.	Railway/ PU/ RB	Name of Officers	Designation
91	ER	Tathagata Dutta	Assistant Divisional Medical Officer
92	SCR	Anurag Wadhwa	Senior Divisional Personnel Officer
93	NR	Chandana Sinha	Inspector
94	CLW	Hariom Chauhan	Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer
95	NER	Rajan Kumar Yadav	Track Maintainer-IV
96	NR	Uchit Singhal	Senior Divisional Commercial Manager
97	SR	Anand Bantia	Sr. Divisional Finance Manager
98	RB	Ravi Ranjan Kumar	Protocol Inspector
99	RB	Sanjeev Mohan	Estate Supervisor
100	RB	Late Shri Sudhir Kumar	Section Officer

Kavach 4.0

Expanding total Coverage to over 1300 RKm across 5 Zones



Highlighting the growing adoption of indigenous safety technology, Indian Railways commissioned 472.3 route kilometres of Kavach Version 4.0 (Automatic Train Protection System) across three network sections on 30 January 2026. The newly commissioned stretches include Vadodara–Virar (344 km) on Western Railway, Tughlakabad Junction Cabin–Palwal (35 km) on Northern Railway, and Manpur–Sarmatanr (93.3 km) on East Central Railway. With this commissioning, Indian Railways is intensifying the deployment of the home-grown Kavach system to improve train protection, safety, and reliability on high-density routes.

This commissioning marks the highest-ever route kilometres of Kavach commissioned on a single day as well as in a single month, with 472.3 route kilometres (RKm) brought under Kavach Version 4.0. The previous highest commissioning stood at 324 RKm on the Kota-Mathura section of West Central Railway. With the latest addition, Kavach Version 4.0 has now been commissioned across five zones of Indian Railways.

Following this inclusion, Kavach Version 4.0 has been commissioned over a total of 1,306.3 RKm across Indian Railways. Prior to this, Kavach Version 4.0 had been commissioned on 834 RKm. This included the Palwal-Mathura-Nagda section (633 RKm) of the Delhi-Mumbai route and the Howrah-Bardhaman section (105 RKm) of the Delhi-Howrah route. In addition, 96 RKm were commissioned on Gujarat's first Bajwa (Vadodara)-Ahmedabad section.

Progress of Kavach 4.0 Implementation across Northern Railway: IR successfully commissioned Kavach 4.0 on the 35 km Tuglakabad Junction Cabin–Palwal section of the four-line Delhi-Mumbai route, which spans 152 main line Tkm. Kavach has been installed over the complete stretch of this corridor comprising major station yards, two main lines with Automatic Signalling system and two lines with Absolute Block Signalling.

This commissioning marks a significant safety upgrade on one of the busiest and high-density corridors of the Indian Railways, covering the Delhi suburban and long-distance rail network. This section is a high-traffic stretch catering to passenger, suburban, and freight trains. The commissioning of Kavach on this section significantly enhances operational safety, reliability, and passenger confidence.

Progress of Kavach 4.0 Implementation across East Central Railway: IR has also commenced train operations with Kavach 4.0 on the 93.3-km Manpur-Sarmatanr section of the DDUGJ-Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Division. The first Kavach-enabled service, Train No. 13305, Sasaram Intercity Express, operated successfully on this section, departing Sone Nagar at 07:42 hrs and arriving at Manpur at 09:35 hrs. During the run, a head-on collision test was conducted, in which the train automatically stopped, validating the system's effectiveness.

Kavach is being installed over 4,235 RKm of East Central Railway, including 417 RKm on the Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Junction-Manpur section, a critical part of the Delhi-Howrah trunk route passing through Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Jharkhand. The section carries mixed traffic and is currently cleared for 130 kmph, with works in progress under Mission Raftar to enhance the speed potential to 160 kmph.■

IR Marks New Milestone in High-Density Freight Operations

By interchanging a record 892 trains in a single day, dedicated freight corridor has set a new benchmark of operational efficiency

Indian Railways is transforming freight transportation nationwide and has recorded a new high in freight movement by providing a swift, reliable and cost-effective end-to-end rail freight solution. By integrating advanced infrastructure, high-capacity corridors and contemporary operational systems, the Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) network is ensuring smooth movement of goods across regions, reducing transit time and logistics costs.

Maintaining its momentum of seamless high-density freight operations, the Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited (DFCCIL) set a new operational benchmark with the highest-ever train interchanges on the DFC network. On 5th January, 2026, a total of 892 'interchange' trains were handled in a single day between the DFC network and five zones of Indian Railways, marking the highest interchange achieved since the corridors were commissioned. The previous record stood at 865 trains, achieved on 4th January, 2026.

This enhanced operational efficiency resulting from the record freight interchange is easing congestion on conventional rail lines, thereby ensuring more timely and comfortable passenger train services and reducing delays in daily commutes. It is also supporting the economic growth of industries, ultimately benefiting the common man through faster delivery of essential goods and lower logistics costs.



The milestone reflects DFCCIL's growing operational capacity, strengthened planning framework and robust traffic management systems. The achievement was enabled through effective regulation of train speeds, maintenance of safe headway and close coordination between adjoining stations, allowing trains to cross stations in minimal time and ensuring safe, fuel-efficient and uninterrupted operations even on heavily loaded sections.

The performance was further supported by modern train scheduling tools, real-time traffic monitoring, automated signalling, digital control rooms and strict safety protocols. Central Control provided network-level planning and supervisory oversight based on inputs from all Operational Control Centres and zonal control offices, ensuring seamless execution across the network.

High-power locomotives played a critical role by hauling long and heavy freight trains at higher average speeds, while strong coordination among loco pilots, assistant loco pilots and train managers ensured alert, disciplined and safe operations throughout the day. Strengthened feeder routes and efficient yard management minimised detention, enabling faster entry and exit of trains and timely evacuation of freight.

Other recent high-volume interchange days on the DFC network include 846 trains on 30th March, 2025, 830 on 14th September, 2025, 820 on 31st March, 2025, 812 on 3rd January, 2026 and 808 on 25th May, 2025, reflecting a sustained trend of high-density freight operations.

While Indian Railways continues to efficiently transport millions of passengers to their destinations, handle high-density freight operations with safety, speed and reliability.

In a First, 42-Wagon, 2768 Metric Tonne Foodgrain Rake Reaches Anantnag Via All-Weather Rail Connectivity

Strengthening food security and supply reliability in the Kashmir Valley, the first full rake of foodgrain (rice) reached Anantnag on 22nd January 2026, marking a major milestone in rail-based freight transportation and demonstrating the resilience of all-weather rail connectivity to the region. In a first-of-its-kind achievement, a complete rake comprising 42 wagons, carrying 2768 metric tonnes of rice, was transported to the Anantnag goods shed by rail, following sustained coordination with the Food Corporation of India (FCI) to reduce logistics costs and ensure timely movement of essential commodities.

Earlier, only mini rakes comprising 21 wagons, carrying 1384 metric tonnes of foodgrain, were moved by rail; however, this time, the full rake was successfully loaded from Sangrur rail terminal in Punjab on 21st January and transported to Anantnag within 24 hours. Despite adverse weather conditions that had disrupted unloading activities a day earlier, the rake was successfully handled, providing a significant boost to the foodgrain supply chain and distribution network in the Valley.

The milestone marks an important beginning in strengthening the foodgrain distribution network in the Kashmir Valley. The transition from mini rakes and road-based transportation to full-capacity railway wagons is expected to significantly reduce overall logistics and freight costs, while ensuring faster and more reliable movement of essential commodities. It will help maintain adequate buffer



stocks in the Valley, particularly during adverse weather conditions and improve the availability of foodgrains for local households.

Reduced reliance on heavy truck traffic along national highways will also contribute to environmental benefits and improved efficiency. Building on the successful movement of apples, cement, fertiliser and now foodgrain, the rail-based logistics is supporting sustained economic activity, resilience and long-term supply chain stability in the region.

The developments underline the transformative impact of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL), one of the most ambitious railway engineering projects in independent India. Even as the Valley experiences snowfall and challenging winter conditions, improved rail connectivity is strengthening trade and logistics, directly benefiting farmers, traders and households by ensuring more dependable access to essential goods.■

Kind Attention

AUTHORS/WRITERS contributing articles for the magazine are requested to restrict their articles to a reasonable size. Ideally an article should not exceed 1000 WORDS.

In view of the space constraints of the magazine, sometimes it becomes difficult to include longer articles. All are requested to appreciate our problem and co-operate.

editorindianrailways@gmail.com

Fertilizer Supplies Cross 530 LMT as Rail Movement Peaks in Kharif and Rabi Seasons

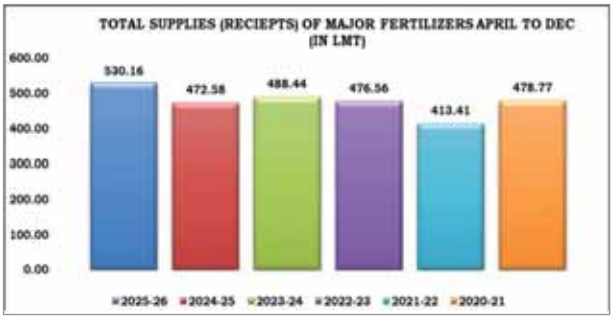
In line with its continued emphasis on food security and farmer support, ensuring the timely availability of fertilizers to farmers has remained one of the government's highest priorities. In this direction, the improved coordination between the Ministry of Railways and the Department of Fertilizers during Kharif 2025 and the ongoing Rabi season was clearly visible at the ground level. Faster and smoother movement of fertilizer rakes enabled timely supplies to states, ensuring that farmers did not face any shortages during the critical stages of cultivation. The Department of Fertilizers appreciated this close cooperation by the Ministry of Railways and stated that such coordinated efforts have helped ensure adequate availability of fertilizers across the country.

During this period, average rake loading increased to 72 rakes per day in July 2025, rose to 78 rakes per day in August 2025 and reached 80 rakes per day in September 2025.

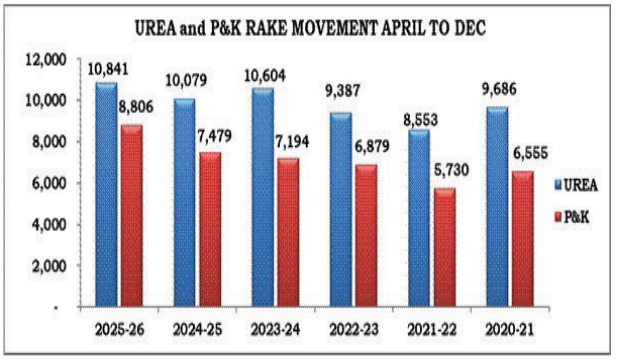
During the financial year 2025-26, from April to December 2025, the government has ensured sufficient and comfortable availability of all major fertilizers across states. For urea, against a requirement of 312.40 lakh metric tonnes (LMT), availability of 350.45 LMT was ensured. Further, major P&K fertilizers (viz. DAP, MOP and NPKS) saw availability of 287.69 LMT against the requirement of 252.81 LMT, consistently exceeding assessed requirements and ensuring uninterrupted supply. States also took concerted measures to ensure last-mile availability to farmers.

Total Supplies of Major Fertilizers April to Dec (In LMT)

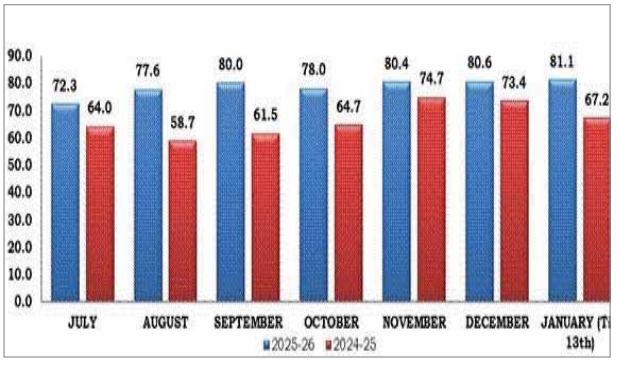
Fertilizer movement during April-December 2025 reached an all-time high, with net supplies crossing 530.16 LMT, surpassing the 500 LMT mark for the first time during this period. This represents a 12.2% increase over the corresponding period of FY 2024-25 and is 8.5% higher than the previous record of FY 2023–24.



Urea and P&K Rake Movement April to Dec



Urea rake movement rose to 10,841 rakes, registering an 8% increase over last year, while P&K fertilizers recorded 8806 rakes, marking an 18% growth. Enhanced coordination with the Ministry of Railways, Ports, state governments and fertilizer companies ensured seamless and timely supply to states during peak agricultural seasons.



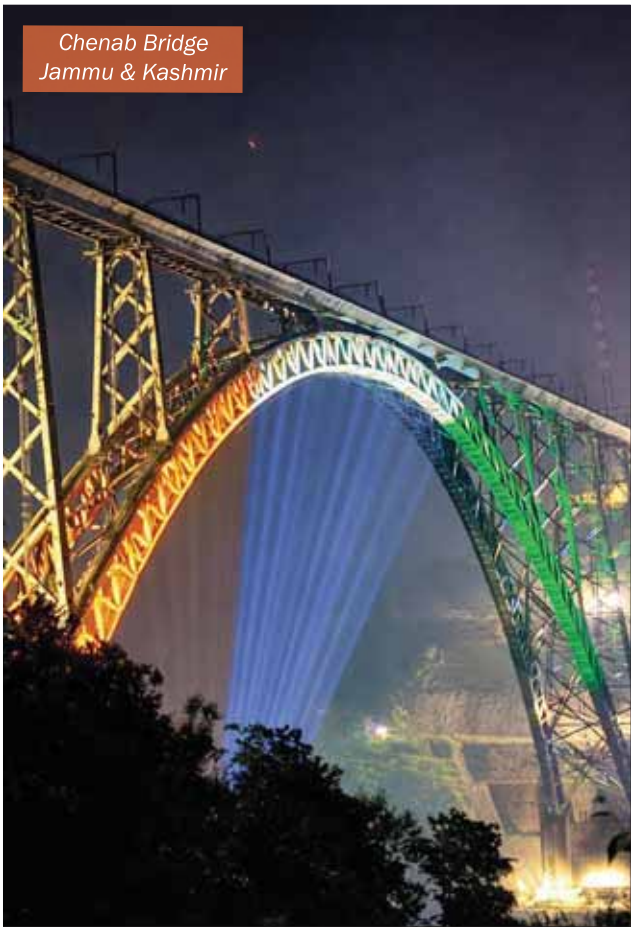
Average Fertilizer Rakes Per Month

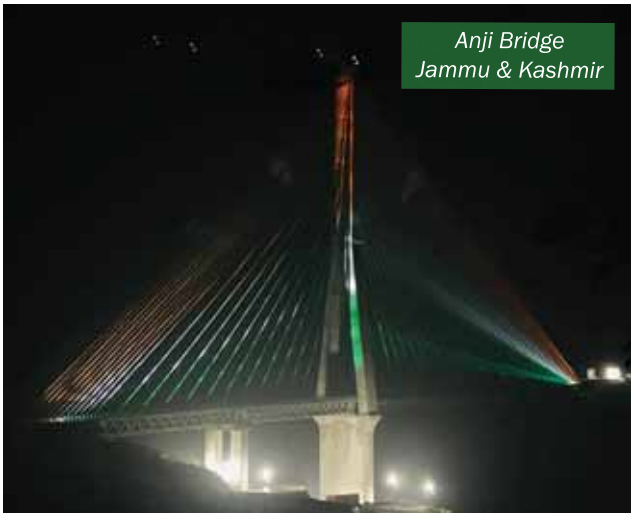
A month-wise comparison from July to January (till 13th January) highlights the sustained increase in the corresponding period last year.

The remarkable performance in fertilizer movement reflects the Government's robust planning, real-time coordination, proactive resolution of bottlenecks and focused monitoring at state and national levels.■

Indian Railways Celebrated

Indian Railways celebrated the 77th Republic Day with patriotic spirit and enthusiasm. Prominent railway stations and offices across the network were decorated and illuminated in Tricolour hues.


Chenab Bridge
Jammu & Kashmir


Anji Bridge
Jammu & Kashmir





Republic Day with Fervour and Gaiety


Vijayawada Railway Station



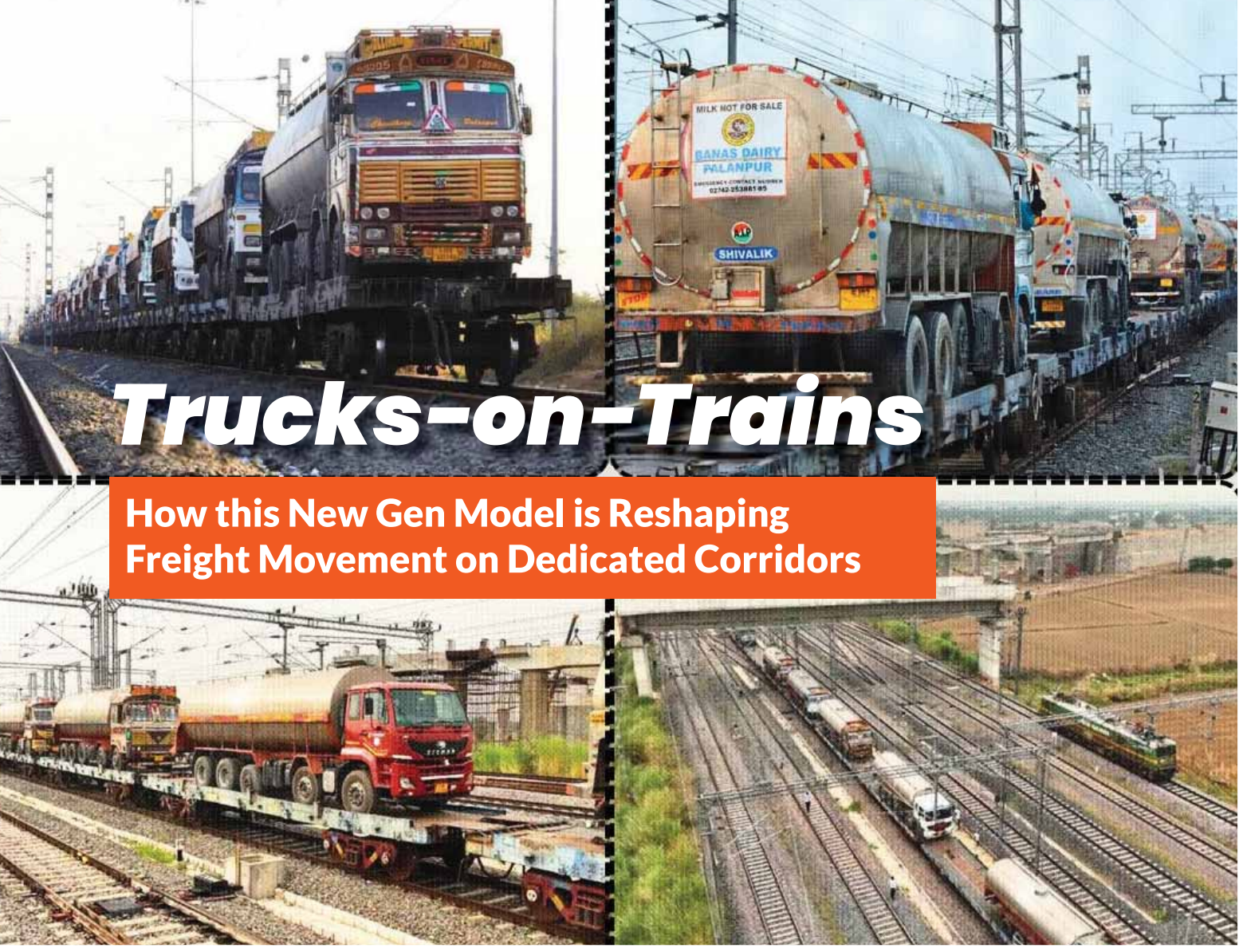

Kacheguda Railway Station


Gorakhpur Jn.


Mau Jn.



Samakhiali Junction



Trucks-on-Trains

How this New Gen Model is Reshaping Freight Movement on Dedicated Corridors

A key strength of the Trucks-on-Trains (ToT) lies in its simple and competitive pricing structure. As India's economy grows and consumption diversifies, freight movement has increased sharply, straining roads, fuel use and air quality. To address this, Indian Railways, through its visionary Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) initiative, has introduced the innovative ToT service. Conceived as part of Indian Railways' long-term freight transformation strategy, the DFC network provides the backbone that enables a new generation of multimodal logistics.

ToT integrates the flexibility of road transport with the efficiency and environmental benefits of electrified rail infrastructure developed under Indian Railways' Dedicated Freight Corridor Programme. The service allows loaded trucks to be carried on specially modified flat wagons along the dedicated freight corridor. Trucks avoid long, congested highway journeys and travel by rail for the main haul. They then complete only short first- and last-mile road movements.

Economic Yet Reliable

At present, the ToT service operates between New Rewari and New Palanpur on the Western DFC network. It will be extended to additional sections as infrastructure development progresses. On the New Palanpur-New Rewari corridor, the service spans approximately 636 kilometres, cutting end-to-end transit time from nearly 30 hours by road to around 12 hours via the ToT service. This integrated road-rail solution enhances transit reliability, shortens turnaround times and reduces overall logistics costs, while shielding long-haul freight movement from many of the uncertainties inherent in highway transport.

A key strength of the ToT lies in its simple and competitive pricing structure. Freight is charged on transparent weight slabs— ₹25,543 per wagon for

trucks up to 25 tonnes, ₹29,191 for 25-45 tonnes and ₹32,000 for 45-58 tonnes—while empty trucks are carried at only ₹21,894 per wagon. To further support the dairy sector, no GST is levied on milk tankers, making the service especially attractive for time-sensitive and perishable cargo. Enhancing operational flexibility, Open Indent booking has been available since January 2024, allowing customers to plan movements in line with their dynamic logistics requirements.

Operational data from the current financial year clearly reflect the growing traction of the service. During FY 2025 (April-December), the Trucks-on-Trains service handled a total of 545 rakes, moving more than three lakh tonnes of freight and generating revenue of ₹36.95 crore. This volume underscores ToT's emergence as a commercially viable and scalable logistics product rather than a pilot-stage innovation.

A closer look at origin-wise performance further highlights its strength. New Palanpur alone accounted for 273 rakes, handling more than two lakh tonnes and generating revenue of ₹20.18 crore, demonstrating strong adoption from western India's freight clusters, particularly in the dairy and FMCG segments. New Rewari contributed almost equally in operational terms, with 272 rakes, moving around 0.1004 million tonnes and generating ₹16.76 crore in revenue. Together, these terminals illustrate how strategically located nodes on the DFC can anchor sustained multimodal freight flows and drive corridor-based logistics efficiency. The service has witnessed strong patronage from western India's freight clusters, particularly from major customers such as the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (Amul) for milk and dairy products, along with other logistics service providers. The relaunch of the Trucks-on-Trains service through a Memorandum of Understanding with GCMMF in June 2023 significantly reinforced industry confidence and helped anchor regular volumes from the dairy sector.

Pioneering Modal Shift

One of the most significant strategic outcomes of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor Trucks-on-Trains service is the modal shift of long-haul freight from road to rail. By transferring the longest and most energy-intensive segment of truck journeys to electrified, high-capacity dedicated freight corridors, the ToT model helps decongest highways, reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels and optimise national logistics costs. Each freight train has the potential to replace dozens of long-haul trucks, resulting in smoother traffic flow, lower accident risks, reduced diesel consumption and diminished wear and tear on road infrastructure.

An important economic advantage for transporters is the avoidance of highway toll costs. Long-distance trucking on national highways involves significant expenditure on toll plazas, which escalates logistics costs and increases trip uncertainty. By shifting the long-haul segment to rail, Trucks-on-Trains enables operators to bypass these recurring toll expenses entirely, improving cost predictability and margins, particularly for high-frequency and long-distance movements.

Cleaner and Safer Transport

The environmental gains are reinforced by the fact that the entire DFC network is fully electrified. Shifting trucks from road to rail significantly reduces emissions of carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides and particulate matter. As India's power generation mix progressively incorporates higher shares of renewable energy, the carbon footprint of rail-based freight under the ToT model is expected to decline further. Beyond tailpipe emissions, Trucks-on-Trains also addresses the often-overlooked issue of road dust pollution. Heavy truck traffic is a major contributor to dust generation on highways, adversely affecting public health, agriculture and roadside ecosystems. By moving truck traffic to rail corridors, ToT helps improve air quality for communities living along major transport routes.

The tangible impact of this shift is clearly visible on the Palanpur-Rewari corridor, spanning approximately 636 kilometres. When trucking over this stretch is shifted to rail, nearly 48,875 trucks are effectively removed from highways for the core journey, operating only for first- and last-mile delivery. This transition results in estimated diesel savings of about 88,81,285 litres, while preventing the emission of approximately 2,30,91,343 kilograms of carbon dioxide (CO_2). These figures demonstrate how corridor-based modal shift delivers measurable environmental and energy benefits at scale.

Another critical advantage of the service is its resilience to adverse weather conditions. Road transport in many parts of India is highly vulnerable to fog, heavy rainfall, extreme heat and poor visibility, particularly in northern regions during winter months, where dense fog frequently disrupts highway movement and increases accident risks. Rail operations on dedicated freight corridors, equipped with advanced signalling and controlled right-of-way, are far less susceptible to such disruptions. By shifting the longest journey segment to rail, ToT enhances schedule reliability and ensures continuity of supply chains even under challenging weather conditions.

Long-distance truck driving is physically demanding and accident-prone. By reducing continuous and long driving hours, the ToT model lowers driver fatigue, improves working conditions and contributes to safer highways with fewer collisions and casualties. Reduced road traffic also translates into lower infrastructure damage and reduced public expenditure on road maintenance.

A New Revenue Stream for Rail-Based Logistics

From a commercial perspective, Trucks-on-Trains has emerged as a new and sustainable revenue stream for rail-based logistics. Since inception, the service has completed over 1955 trips, handled more than a million tonnes of freight and generated cumulative revenue exceeding ₹131 crore. Strong uptake from sectors such as dairy, automobiles, fast-moving consumer goods and food processing reflects growing industry confidence in the model. The relaunch of the service through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) in June 2023 further reinforced its credibility among large institutional shippers.

Looking ahead, scalability is being strengthened through the development of new-generation wagon designs under the Flat Multipurpose (FMP) platform, engineered to carry trucks more efficiently, safely and at higher payloads. These wagons will enhance loading efficiency and operational flexibility across varying truck configurations. Simultaneously, the introduction of additional origin-destination points and terminals across the DFC network will reduce first- and last-mile costs and expand the service's reach to new industrial clusters.

From a forward-looking perspective, the service opens new possibilities for Indian businesses seeking reliable, pan-India market access with predictable transit times. For perishable agricultural producers and food-processing industries, ToT enables true first-mile-to-last-mile integration. Fresh chikoo grown in Maharashtra can be transported from orchards to nearby ToT terminals, moved rapidly over the Dedicated Freight Corridor and delivered by road to distant consumption centres with minimal handling and time loss. Similarly, onions from Nashik, one of India's most important horticultural hubs, can reach northern and eastern markets efficiently, reducing spoilage and price volatility.

Part of a Larger Multimodal Vision

Trucks-on-Trains is not a standalone initiative but a core component of the Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited's (DFCCIL) broader multimodal logistics vision. Alongside high-capacity freight corridors, multimodal cargo terminals and logistics parks, the service ensures that road and rail complement each other, deploying each mode where it is most efficient, economical and environmentally sustainable.

In essence, ToT represents a structural shift in India's freight transport paradigm. By combining innovation, electrified infrastructure, competitive pricing, operational resilience and clear environmental and social benefits, DFCCIL is demonstrating that freight movement can be efficient, reliable and responsible at the same time.■

READERS

are requested to send their

SUGGESTIONS/FEEDBACK

9220505349 editorindianrailways@gmail.com

Fourth Line of Baikunth-Urkura Approved

As part of its sustained efforts to enhance capacity and operational efficiency, the Ministry of Railways has accorded sanction for the construction of a fourth railway line between Baikunth and Urkura, covering 26.40 km, at an estimated cost of ₹426.01 crore, under the SECR.

The Baikunth-Urkura section is a vital part of the Bilaspur-Raipur-Nagpur main line, which also falls on the Mumbai-Howrah high-density railway network, one of the busiest rail corridors in the country. At present, this section is operating with saturated capacity, underscoring the urgent need for capacity expansion.

The line will significantly ease congestion and enhance the smooth movement of trains. The project will create capacity for additional passenger and coaching services, reduce delays and improve punctuality on this heavily utilised section. The project is expected to facilitate additional freight traffic of approximately 14.25



million tonnes per annum. This increase in freight handling capacity is projected to generate additional annual earnings of about ₹61.70 crore for IR, starting from the first year of commissioning.

The work has been identified under the Energy, Cement and Mineral Corridor, reflecting Indian Railways' continued focus on strengthening infrastructure in high-traffic and economically critical regions.■

High-Speed Rail Network Expands to 84,244 km as Indian Railways Steps up Track Renewal

With safety and reliability at the core of its infrastructure strategy, Indian Railways has made steady and measurable progress in reinforcing track assets through sustained investment over the last eleven years.

During the FY 2024-25, IR carried out track renewal over 6851 Tkm. In the current FY 2025-26, more than 7500 Tkm of track renewal works are underway. Further, track renewal covering 7900 Tkm is planned for 2026-27, reflecting continued emphasis on asset reliability and safety.

Substantial progress has also been made in turnout renewal, which is crucial for smooth train movement. In 2024-25, 7161 Thick Web Switches and 1704 Weldable CMS Crossings were provided. In 2025-26, over 8000 Thick Web Switches and more than 3000 Weldable CMS Crossings are being provided.

Mechanised deep screening of ballast, essential for maintaining track stability and improving ride quality, has been carried out consistently. During 2024-25, 7442 Tkm of deep screening were completed, while over 7500 Tkm of deep screening work are being undertaken in 2025-26.

To support mechanised maintenance and improve productivity, IR has significantly expanded its track machine fleet. More than 1100 track machines have been procured since 2014, enabling faster and more efficient maintenance of the railway network.

Safety fencing along railway tracks has been taken up on priority to minimise cattle run-over incidents and trespassing, thereby enhancing overall safety. About 15,000 km of fencing have been provided so far, leading to improved safety on sections where trains operate at speeds exceeding 110 kmph.

As a result of these sustained efforts, IR has achieved remarkable progress in upgrading tracks. The length of track permitting speeds of 110 kmph and above has increased from 31,445 km (about 40% of the network) in 2014 to 84,244 km (about 80% of the network) at present, enabling faster and more efficient train operations.■

Record Production of Modern General and Non-AC Coaches Supports Passenger-Centric Rail Reforms

Amrit Bharat trains, fair ticketing measures, special services during peak seasons and station holding areas improve travel for common passengers

With the interests of common passengers at the forefront, Indian Railways is steadily modernising its infrastructure and services to deliver safer, more comfortable, convenient and affordable rail travel. Backed by sustained investments, structural reforms and technology-driven initiatives, the Railways is reinforcing a robust passenger-first system for daily commuters and long-distance travellers alike.

Record Output of Modern General Coaches

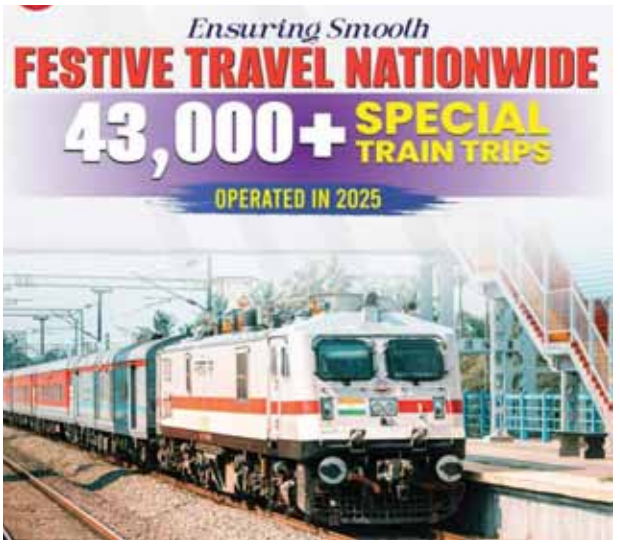
Indian Railways has achieved record production of general and non-AC coaches equipped with modern passenger-friendly facilities to accommodate rising demand at affordable fares. These coaches enhance travel comfort while significantly increasing carrying capacity, reinforcing Indian Railways' commitment to inclusive and accessible rail travel.

Building on this base, Indian Railways has an ongoing coach production programme for the current and next financial year to further strengthen and modernise its passenger fleet. For the ongoing financial year 2025-26, which is already in its final quarter, the production plan provides for 4838 new LHB GS and non-AC coaches (LS coaches – 2817, LSCN coaches – 2021). For 2026-27, the production target is 4802 LHB coaches (LS coaches – 2638, LSCN coaches – 2164). This planned production is aimed at meeting rising passenger demand while enhancing safety, comfort and the overall quality of train services.



Seasonal Rush Handled Through Special Trains

To manage seasonal and festive rush, Indian Railways significantly scaled up special train operations in 2025. A record over 43,000 special train trips were operated, including 17,340 for Mahakumbh, 1144 for Holi, 12,417 Summer Specials and 12,383 for Chhath Puja, ensuring smoother passenger movement and improved travel convenience during peak periods. These large-scale operations helped ease congestion, ensured smoother passenger movement and provided timely connectivity during periods of exceptionally high demand.



Development of Holding Areas at Major Stations

Indian Railways has identified 76 stations across the country for the development of passenger holding areas, following the successful implementation of the Yatri Suvidha Kendra at New Delhi Railway Station. The New Delhi holding area, completed in four months, can accommodate about 7000 passengers and is equipped with toilets, ticketing facilities, automatic ticket vending machines and free RO drinking water. The new holding areas will follow modular designs based on local conditions and are targeted for completion before the 2026 festival season.



Aadhaar Verification Ensures Genuine Bookings

To ensure that genuine passengers receive confirmed tickets, Indian Railways has strengthened ticketing integrity through Aadhaar verification and advanced technological monitoring. Aadhaar verification of users is an important step, which has been taken to make the system more robust. Only Aadhaar-verified users are allowed to book Tatkal tickets. Cutting-edge technology is also being used to identify and prevent unscrupulous users trying to misuse the e-ticketing system. As a result, 5.73 crore suspicious and inactive IRCTC user accounts have been deactivated or temporarily suspended, with further action ongoing.

Passenger Security Upgraded Through Strategic Investments

Passenger safety remains a top priority, with 84% of funds allocated for safety-related works already utilised under the Gross Budgetary Support (GBS) outlays for 2025-26. Consequential train accidents have declined sharply from 135 in 2014-15 to 31 in 2024-25 and further to 11 in 2025-26 (up to November, 2025), compared to an average of 171 per year during 2004-14. The safety budget has nearly tripled to ₹1,16,470 crore in the current financial year. Fog safety devices have increased from 90 in 2014 to 25,939 in 2025.

Regional Travel Improved with Amrit and Namo Bharat Trains

Amrit Bharat Express trains, fully non-AC services with Sleeper and General Class coaches, are providing high-quality travel at affordable fares. During 2025, 13 Amrit Bharat trains were introduced, whereas 20 Amrit Bharat train services were also introduced in January 2026, taking the total operational services to 50. In addition, two Namo Bharat Rapid Rail services are operational between Bhuj-Ahmedabad and Jaynagar-Patna, strengthening high-frequency regional connectivity.

Indian Railways is strengthening its focus on common passengers by increasing affordable non-AC capacity, running special trains to manage peak rush and improving station facilities. Strong action against illegal ticketing, major safety investments and the introduction of non-AC Amrit Bharat trains, along with improved regional connectivity, are helping Indian Railways steadily build a modern, inclusive and passenger-first transport system focused on everyday travellers. ■



Timetable of Trains 2026

549 Trains Get Faster, 122 New Services added across Railways

New services include Vande Bharat, Amrit Bharat, Humsafar, Jan Shatabdi, Namo Bharat and Rajdhani trains to enhance speed and connectivity

Indian Railways has turbocharged services across the network by introducing new trains, extending existing ones, increasing frequencies, converting select trains to Superfast and speeding up operations across multiple zones under the Timetable of Trains (TAG) 2026. In the Central Railway (CR) zone, four new trains have been introduced, six trains extended and 30 trains sped up. The East Coast Railway (ECOR) added four new trains, extended four services and three trains sped up. The East Central Railway (ECR) achieved a major expansion with 20 new trains introduced, 20 trains extended and 12 trains sped up. In the Eastern Railway (ER), six new trains were introduced, four trains extended and 32 trains sped up.

The North Central Railway (NCR) introduced two new trains, extended four trains, increased the frequency of two trains and sped up one train. The North Eastern Railway (NER) added eight new trains, extended four, increased the frequency of two and sped up 12 trains. The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) introduced 10 new trains and sped up 36 trains. The Northern Railway (NR) introduced 20 new trains, extended 10 and sped up 24 trains, while the North Western Railway (NWR) added 12 new trains, extended six, increased the frequency of two and sped up 89 trains.

The Southern Railway (SR) introduced six new trains, four were extended, two were converted to Superfast and 75 trains were sped up. The South Western Railway (SWR) introduced eight new trains, extended six, converted eight to Superfast and sped up 117 trains, the highest among all zones.

The West Central Railway (WCR) introduced eight new trains and sped up 27 trains. The Western Railway (WR) introduced 10 new trains, extended 10, increased the frequency of two and sped up 80 trains.

Overall, under TAG 2026, 122 new trains were introduced, 86 trains extended, eight frequency increases were made, 10 trains were converted to Superfast and 549 trains were sped up across Indian Railways.

Break-up of Introduction of Trains

The 122 new trains introduced under TAG 2026 include a mix of premium, express and passenger services. Among these, 26 Amrit Bharat trains were introduced, including four trains via TAG-TOD. The highest share comes from Mail/Express trains with 60 services, of which eight were introduced via TAG-TOD. In addition, two Humsafar trains, two Jan Shatabdi trains, two Namo Bharat Rapid Rail services and two Rajdhani trains were introduced.

Further, 28 Vande Bharat trains were added to enhance semi-high-speed connectivity. Altogether, these categories account for the grand total of 122 new trains introduced during the period.



Speeding-Up of Trains

A total of 549 trains have been sped-up under TAG 2026 to improve punctuality and reduce travel time. Out of these, 376 trains were sped-up by 5-15 minutes, 105 trains by 16-30 minutes, 48 trains by 31-59 minutes and 20 trains by 60 minutes or more.

The SWR led with a major contribution, including 66 trains sped up by 5–15 minutes, 29 by 16–30 minutes, 12 by 31–59 minutes and 10 by 60 minutes or more. The CR sped up 13 trains by 5–15 minutes, 13 by 16–30 minutes and four by 31–59 minutes. The ECOR sped up two trains by 5–15 minutes and one train by 16–30 minutes. The ECR sped up seven trains by 5–15 minutes, two by 16–30 minutes, two by 31–59 minutes and one train by 60 minutes or more. The ER recorded improvement with 29 trains speeded up by 5–15 minutes and three trains by 16–30 minutes.

The NCR sped up one train by 5–15 minutes. The NER sped up nine trains by 5–15 minutes and three trains by 16–30 minutes. The NFR sped up 20 trains by 5–15 minutes, 10 by 16–30 minutes, three by 31–59 minutes and three by 60 minutes or more. The NR sped up 22 trains by 5–15 minutes and two trains by 16–30 minutes. The NWR sped up 67 trains by 5–15 minutes, 14 by 16–30 minutes, seven by 31–59 minutes and one train by over 60 minutes.

The SECR sped up nine trains by 5–15 minutes and two trains by 16–30 minutes. The SR sped up 53 trains by 5–15 minutes, 10 by 16–30 minutes, nine by 31–59 minutes and three by over 60 minutes. The WCR sped up 25 trains by 5–15 minutes, one by 16–30 minutes and one by 31–59 minutes. The WR sped up 53 trains by 5–15 minutes, 15 by 16–30 minutes, 10 by 31–59 minutes and two by 60 minutes or more.

Overall, TAG 2026 reflects Indian Railways' strong focus on improving travel time and passenger convenience. With 549 trains sped up across zones, the initiative enhances punctuality, operational efficiency and connectivity, delivering faster, more reliable rail services nationwide.■

Indian Railways Dedicates WAP-7 Locomotive MUKHI to Honour Cheetah Conservation Success

Marking a proud convergence of technology and conservation, Indian Railways has dedicated a WAP-7 class electric locomotive as "MUKHI" at the Howrah Electric Loco Shed under Eastern Railway. The specially crafted livery highlights the speed, agility and elegance of the cheetah, symbolising India's fastest land animal and a notable conservation success.

Mukhi holds special significance in India's conservation journey. She is the offspring of Jwala, one of the cheetahs brought from Namibia under Project Cheetah, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 17th September, 2022. Mukhi later gave birth to five healthy cubs in November 2025, becoming the first cheetah born in India to successfully reproduce, marking a major milestone in the reintroduction of cheetahs in the country.

The dedicated locomotive, WAP-7 No. 39178, is equipped with modern systems including the Kavach Train Protection System, remote monitoring, an air-conditioned driver's cab and



several technical upgrades to enhance safety, efficiency and reliability.

Through this initiative, Indian Railways celebrates both technological advancement and India's growing success in wildlife conservation.■

ASC Arjun Debuts at Visakhapatnam Railway Station

Reinforcing its commitment to technological innovation aimed at enhancing passenger safety, security and service delivery, East Coast Railway has introduced a humanoid robot 'ASC ARJUN' at Visakhapatnam Railway Station under the aegis of the Railway Protection Force (RPF). This pioneering step is the first such initiative undertaken by Indian Railways.

The humanoid was unveiled by Inspector General (RPF) Alok Bohra and Divisional Railway Manager Lalit Bohra in presence of Senior Divisional Security Commandant (RPF) AK Dubey at Visakhapatnam railway station. Alok Bohra, said that ASC ARJUN strengthen railway security, improve passenger experience and support frontline staff. Indian Railways remains committed to embracing innovation to create a safe, secure and passenger-friendly railway ecosystem.

The robot has been entirely designed and developed in Visakhapatnam, incorporating state-of-the-art technology through indigenous innovation. Under the guidance of Bohra, Inspector General, RPF and Lalit Bohra, Divisional Railway Manager, the team led by A. K. Dubey worked diligently for over a year to successfully develop this advanced technology.



Key Functionalities and Benefits

Intrusion Detection: The robot can identify intruders using a Face Recognition System (FRS) and instantly alert RPF personnel through IoT-enabled alerts, ensuring rapid response and reduced detection time.

Crowd Management: AI-based passenger density analysis helps prevent congestion and enables proactive crowd control measures during peak hours. The robot will send messages to the control room and alert the security personnel for quick response.

Public Announcements: Autonomous safety and information announcements are delivered in English, Hindi and Telugu, improving passenger awareness and compliance. This will enable the public to be guided effectively during peak hours.

Platform Patrol: Semi-autonomous navigation along predefined paths with obstacle avoidance allows continuous patrolling and a 24×7 presence, reducing manpower burden. This will improve effective security management.

Passenger Assistance: ASC ARJUN interacts with passengers through friendly gestures and information support, enhancing public trust and the perception of RPF authority.

Situational Awareness: Continuous monitoring with an integrated dashboard provides real-time intelligence to support effective decision-making by RPF and control rooms.

Fire & Smoke Detection: Early detection of fire and smoke with instant alerts enables swift emergency response and enhanced passenger safety.

Interactive Capabilities:

- Multi-language announcements for safety instructions and crowd guidance.
- Cultural gestures such as Namaste for passengers and salutes to RPF officers.
- Real-time IoT connectivity with RPF control rooms.
- Passenger-friendly user interface for public interaction and assistance.











ONE STATION ONE PRODUCT

Showcases India's Regional Heritage On Rail Platforms

Implemented at over 2,000 railway stations

OSOP connects 1.32 lakh artisans and small producers directly with millions of daily passengers

Indian Railways' One Station One Product (OSOP) scheme has emerged as a nationally impactful platform for promoting local craftsmanship and economic inclusion. It is energising grassroots entrepreneurship across the country by connecting regional producers with millions of travellers. The initiative seeks to transform railway stations into vibrant showcases of India's rich regional diversity.

By integrating local heritage with the national railway network, OSOP not only enhances the passenger experience but also supports inclusive economic growth.

As of 19th January, 2026, OSOP outlets have been established at 2002 stations, with a total of 2326 outlets operational. These outlets have become a source of livelihood for thousands of local artisans, weavers and small producers, who now have a direct connection with millions of passengers every day. Moreover, since the launch of OSOP in 2022, the initiative has created direct economic opportunities for more than 1.32 lakh beneficiaries across India.

By integrating commerce with culture, Indian Railways has transformed stations into hubs of local enterprise. The OSOP initiative stands as a true example of "Vocal for Local", empowering communities while enriching the travel experience for passengers across the nation.■

President's Service Medals Conferred on RPF, RPSF Personnel

On the occasion of Republic Day, 2026, President of India, Droupadi Murmu awarded the President's Medal for Distinguished Service (PSM) and the Medal for Meritorious Service (MSM) to officers and personnel of the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and the Railway Protection Special Force (RPSF), in recognition of their dedicated service, professionalism and exemplary contribution to railway security.

President's Medal for Distinguished Service



Aroma Singh Thakur
Inspector General
South Central Railway

Medal for Meritorious Service



Uttam Kumar Bandyopadhyay
Assistant Security Commissioner, SCR



Kalyan Deori
Assistant Commandant, Railway Protection Special Force



Balwan Singh
Inspector
Northern Railway



Praful Chandra Panda
Inspector, East Coast Railway



Prakash Charan Das
Inspector, East Coast Railway



Mukesh Kumar Soam
Inspector, Railway Protection Special Force



Pappala Srinivasa Rao
Sub Inspector, East Coast Railway



Anwar Husain
Sub Inspector, Western Railway



Srinivas Ravula
Sub Inspector, South Central Railway



Shiv Lahari Meena
Sub Inspector, Railway Protection Special Force



Dikkala Venkata Murali Krishna
Assistant Sub Inspector, East Coast Railway



Sanjeev Kumar
Assistant Sub Inspector, Northern Railway



Maheswara Reddy Karnati
Head Constable, South Central Railway



C. Ilaya Bharathi
Head Constable, Southern Railway



Mohd Rafique
Constable/Dhobi, Railway Protection Special Force

The President's Medal for Distinguished Service is awarded for a specially distinguished record of service, while the Medal for Meritorious Service recognises valuable service marked by resourcefulness and devotion to duty.

These awards are conferred twice every year, on Republic Day and Independence Day, to honour and motivate RPF and RPSF personnel in upholding the highest standards of service in safeguarding Indian Railways.■

Dum Dum Cantonment Metro Strengthens Suburban Links to Bangaon, Hasnabad and Barasat

More good news for Bangaon, Hasnabad, Habra and Barasat-bound passengers! Metro Railway has already started to provide suburban passengers fast, Metro Railway has already started providing suburban passengers with fast, comfortable and smooth services from Dum Dum Cantonment, cutting short their routine travel time from home to workplaces and back. This was unthinkable just a few years ago. With the introduction of a suburban service for Bangaon from Dum Dum Cantonment and the extension of the Hasnabad–Barasat local up to this station, more suburban passengers can now avail Yellow Line Metro services conveniently.

After the inauguration of the Noapara-Jai Hind Bimanbandar stretch of the Yellow Line by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last August, commuting to and from the airport has become a cakewalk for thousands of air travellers. Dum Dum Cantonment Metro station is steadily gaining importance as one of the key stations on the Yellow Line, offering suburban passengers a unique opportunity to travel in comfort and ease, especially during morning and evening peak hours. The station has emerged as another gateway to Kolkata for suburban passengers travelling to different parts of the city. Their long and arduous journeys are gradually becoming a thing of the past, as seamless connectivity between Metro Railway and Eastern Railway allows passengers to easily access suburban services of the Sealdah Division after alighting here. This integration enables commuters to conveniently change over to Bangaon and Barasat locals originating from Dum Dum Cantonment during peak hours, and vice versa, saving valuable time and money while ensuring smoother and more comfortable travel. Further improvements are expected in the coming days.

Especially during peak hours, the strategic location of Dum Dum Cantonment Metro station has proved to be a boon for thousands of commuters. At present, passengers can avail the relatively less crowded Bangaon local originating



from the station at 18:37 hrs to return home in the evening. With Eastern Railway introducing a new EMU service from Dum Dum Cantonment to Bangaon at 20:05 hrs from 4th December, 2025, more suburban passengers are expected to benefit after getting down from Metro services during the evening rush. This will eliminate the need to travel to Sealdah to board overcrowded Bangaon locals.

Additionally, from 4th December, 2025, one Hasnabad-Barasat EMU local will be extended up to Dum Dum Cantonment, reaching the station at 19:51 hrs. Suburban passengers travelling from Hasnabad, Basirhat and Barasat will be able to seamlessly shift to Metro services for destinations such as Behala or Joka during peak hours, avoiding traffic congestion. This enhanced connectivity is expected to become increasingly popular and passenger-friendly. With the introduction and extension of these suburban services, along with Metro connectivity at Dum Dum Cantonment, commuters are set to gain significant relief during peak hours.

For the benefit of the commuters, Metro authorities are also gearing up to manage the anitcipated rush in the coming days and are taking all possible steps to ensure a smooth, comfortable and enjoyable travel experience for thousands of commuters.■

Canadian High Commissioner Explores Engineering Feat of East-West Metro



Demonstrating international appreciation for India's advanced metro infrastructure, His Excellency Chris Cooter, High Commissioner of Canada in India, travelled on the East–West Metro's underwater section beneath the River Hooghly on 11th December, 2025.

Anuj Mittal, MD of KMRCL and the Principal Chief Engineer of Metro Railway, along with Satyaki Nath, Principal Chief Operations Manager, Metro Railway and other officials of Metro Railway and KMRCL accompanied His Excellency during this visit. He was visibly pleased seeing the arrangements of underwater Metro. Officers of Metro Railway and KMRCL briefed him about the East-West Metro construction methods, like tunnel boring etc and also the engineering challenges faced during the execution of this underwater Metro project.■

Bangladesh Railway Delegation Visits RDSO to Review Safety Testing of LHB Coaches

A nine-member delegation of Bangladesh Railway led by Md. Zidul Islam, Project Director, Bangladesh Railway, visited RDSO on 16th December, 2025. RITES has received a 200 LHB-type coach export order for Bangladesh, and the same is being manufactured at RCF Kapurthala, and RDSO has been associated with this coveted export project for safety verification by conducting fatigue testing of the bogie, crash simulation of the shell body at RDSO, and is also associated in squeeze testing of the shell at RCF. Qazi Mairaj Ahmad, ADG, RDSO welcomed the delegation.■



BLW's Capabilities Reviewed by Botswana Transport Minister



In line with the deepening bilateral engagement between India and Botswana in the transport and infrastructure sector, Noah Salake, Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Government of Botswana, paid an official visit to the premier Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW), Varanasi, on 27th December, 2025. In the course of the visit, he closely reviewed the modern locomotives manufactured at the unit, their production processes and advance technical features.

The Minister appreciated BLW's state-of-the-art technology, innovations and the excellent quality of its locomotives. The visit was significant in view of BLW's growing international reputation in the field of locomotive manufacturing.■

WR Unveils Digital Lounge and Co-Working Facility at Mumbai Central



Strengthening its efforts to modernise passenger amenities, Western Railway has set up a first-of-its-kind Digital Lounge and Co-Working Space at Mumbai Central station (Main Line).

The facility, spread over an area of 1700 sq. ft., has been designed to provide a convenient and functional workspace within the station premises. It caters to passengers who may require basic office facilities, meeting spaces, or a quiet work environment while travelling, thereby addressing the evolving needs of today's passengers.

The project is expected to generate approximately ₹3.20 crore in revenue over a five-year period, contributing significantly to Western Railway's non-fare revenue initiatives.

The Digital Lounge is intended to cater to business travellers, professionals and remote workers.

The Digital Lounge offers a thoughtfully designed environment equipped with modern amenities:

- High-speed Wi-Fi and multiple charging points.
- Comfortable seating arrangements.
- Dedicated conference and meeting rooms for private discussions.
- Flexible spaces for meetings and video conferencing.
- Self-service light refreshments and non-alcoholic beverages.
- Modular workstations for individual productivity.
- Upgraded toilet and washroom facilities.



The Digital Lounge initiative marks a significant step forward in aligning Indian Railways with India's rapidly expanding digital economy and the growing culture of flexible and remote working. The successful commissioning of the Mumbai Central Digital Lounge reflects Western Railway's forward-looking approach toward station redevelopment and passenger-centric infrastructure.■



(Left) Leadership in stride — General Manager, Western Railway Vivek Kumar Gupta, along with senior officials, participating in the Tata Mumbai Marathon 2026. (Right) Western Railway staff in uniform carrying powerful safety and social messages as part of the organisation's marathon contingent

BLW Clinches 69th All India Railway Golf Championship



Marking a memorable sporting occasion, the 69th All India Railway Golf Championship 2025–26 concluded with grandeur on 8th January 2026 at the golf course of Rail Coach Factory (RCF), Kapurthala. Demonstrating consistency and skill, Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW), Varanasi, emerged as champions by securing first place with an impressive total score of 448. The host team, RCF Kapurthala, Punjab, secured the runner-up position with a score of 452, while South Central Railway, Secunderabad, finished third with a score of 472.

In the individual events, RCF's Yuvraj Singh won the Longest Drive competition and was declared the Best Golfer with a gross score of 141. BLW's Gulfam Hussain and Imamul Haq secured the first and second runner-up positions, respectively, with scores of 148 each.

The prize distribution ceremony was attended by senior officials of the Railway Sports Control Board and RCF Sports Association, along with players and sports enthusiasts, where the winning and runner-up teams were presented with trophies.■

Golden Finish for Railways in Volleyball





At the 72nd Senior National Volleyball Championship, held in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, Indian Railways Men's Volleyball Team secured first place, while Women's Team finished as runners-up.

Railways Sweeps Top Honours at Senior National Basketball Meet





At the 75th Senior National Basketball Championships, held in Chennai from 4 to 11 January 2026, both Indian Railways Men's and Women's Basketball Teams emerged as champions on the national stage.



Indian Railways Women's Boxing Team clinched the title at the 9th Elite Women National Boxing Championship held at Greater Noida, UP, from 4–10 January 2026.



Indian Railways' Men bagged the top spot at the Senior National Kho Kho Championship 2025–26 in Kazipet, Telangana, held from 11–15 January 2026.



Indian Railways secured top honours in both the Men's and Women's categories at the 60th National Cross Country Championship, held in Ranchi, Jharkhand, on 24 January 2026.



Indian Railways Ball Badminton Team won the gold medal at the 9th Federation Cup Ball Badminton Championship, held in Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, from 24 to 26 January 2026.

Bridges of India

Architecture Against the Odds

Spanning over turbulent rivers, deep gorges and restless seas, India's bridges stand as silent testimonies to the country's engineering ambition. They connect not just towns and regions, but people, cultures and economies, often in places where geography had long dictated isolation. Across India, bridges shape everyday life in ways most of us barely notice. They shorten distances that once took days to cross, open access to remote communities and withstand nature at its fiercest. Among the countless bridges that form a vast network throughout the country, several key bridges exemplify the scale and vision of India's infrastructure. Each one carries its own tale, of daring design, relentless weather and the human resolve to overcome terrain.

Bridges that Define India's Connectivity

Atal Bihari Vajpayee Sewri-Nhava Sheva Atal Setu

Stretching across the Arabian Sea like a bold stroke on the city's canvas, the Atal Setu, also known as the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL), marks Mumbai's biggest step towards a horizon unrestrained by traffic and time. It has been developed to ease the heavy traffic burden of Mumbai's island city. Built using advanced construction and safety systems, the bridge offers a faster and safer route across the bay, reducing accident risks and improving the daily travel experience for commuters. Its impact, however, extends beyond transportation. The MTHL has helped boost tourism in Mumbai and nearby regions, while also enhancing connectivity for trade and industry, contributing to the growth of the local economy. Spanning 16.5 kilometres over the sea and extending another 5.5 kilometres on land, the project was approved at a cost of ₹17,843 crore and stands as India's longest sea bridge. Even amid the unprecedented challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the project managed to stay on track and meet its planned deadline.

Chenab Bridge

India's engineering prowess has reached a new pinnacle with the completion of the Chenab Bridge, the world's highest railway arch bridge. It has been hailed as a testament to the brilliance and commitment of the country's engineers and workers as the project confronted hurdles, from difficult terrain and extreme weather to falling rocks in the mountains, making construction exceptionally demanding. While millions travel to Paris to admire the Eiffel Tower, the Chenab Bridge rises 35 metres higher, positioning itself not only as a vital infrastructural asset but also



Vande Bharat Express train passing through Chenab Bridge



Anji Khad Bridge

as an emerging tourist landmark. Perched 359 metre above the Chenab River, the bridge forms a crucial segment of the Udhampur–Srinagar–Baramulla Railway Link (USBRL). With Vande Bharat trains set to operate on the route, travel time between Katra and Srinagar will reduce to just about three hours. The 1315-metre-long steel arch structure has been designed to withstand wind speeds up to 260 kmph and built with a projected lifespan of 120 years. Constructed at a cost of ₹1486 crore, the Chenab Rail Bridge stands as a symbol of India's ambition, technical excellence and advancing infrastructure

New Pamban Bridge

The newly constructed Pamban Bridge, connecting Rameswaram with the mainland, is India's first vertical lift railway sea bridge. It has emerged as a standout symbol of modern Indian infrastructure on the world map. Built at a cost exceeding ₹700 crore, the 2.07 km structure includes a 72.5-metre vertical lift section that can rise 17 metres, allowing ships to pass safely without halting train movement. The new Pamban Bridge's construction encountered major environmental and logistical challenges, including turbulent waters, strong winds, cyclones and seismic risks and the difficulty of transporting heavy materials to the remote site within tight tidal windows. Through innovative engineering and advanced technology, over 1400 tons of fabrication, lift-span launches, 99 girders and extensive track and electrification work at sea were completed with zero injuries. Crafted with stainless reinforcement, high-performance protective coatings and fully welded joints, the bridge promises greater longevity and lower upkeep. It has also been prepared for future growth, with space for a second railway line. A specialised polysiloxane finish shields the structure from corrosion, an essential safeguard given the demanding coastal conditions.

Dhola–Sadiya Bridge

The Dhola–Sadiya Bridge, also known as the Bhupen Hazarika Setu, is a vital link between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, providing the first permanent road connection between northern Assam and eastern Arunachal Pradesh. Built as a beam bridge, it sweeps over the Lohit River, one of the Brahmaputra's major tributaries, connecting Dhola in Tinsukia district to Sadiya in the north. Stretching 9.15 kilometres, it is built to withstand the load of 60-tonne military tanks, including the Indian Army's Arjun and T-72 models. This capability adds significant strategic value to the structure.■



New Pamban Bridge

How a Single Critical Failure Can Collapse Even the Best Services



R. N. Singh,
General Manager
Southern Railway

"All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way"

—Leo Tolstoy

Tolstoy's opening line in his masterpiece 'Anna Karenina' captures a universal truth that applies far beyond the realm of literature. In any complex system, success emerges only when multiple essential conditions function together at the same time. By contrast, a single critical breakdown is enough to trigger systemic collapse. Therefore, all successful systems look alike in the sense that their essential components perform well, whereas each failed system appears peculiar and unique in its own way—shaped by which particular weak link gives way.

This phenomenon, known as the Anna Karenina Principle, explains why even highly capable and seemingly robust service organisations sometimes suffer sudden and disproportionate collapse.

In today's service-driven economy, the major customer and public services—like airlines, hospitals, railways, hospitality firms, event organisers and digital platforms—operate through tightly interconnected processes within complex systems. Their performance and reliability depend not only on excellence across visible parameters, but equally on preventing the breakdown of a few non-negotiable and critical conditions. When one of these collapses, multiple strengths elsewhere fail to compensate.

The principle rests on a simple logic. Certain foundations—such as safety, hygiene, security, system access and logistical coordination—are not dispensable or substitutable. They function as structural pillars. No amount of efficiency can compensate for a safety lapse. Luxury cannot offset poor sanitation. A sophisticated digital interface cannot replace reliable and safe system access. When these basics fail, the system fails despite other strengths. That's why it is said that all good systems are inherently fragile.

The consequences of ignoring this logic are visible across sectors.

In aviation, Boeing's 737 MAX crisis demonstrated how a single flawed subsystem—software at the backend, coupled with inadequate training and regulatory oversight—could override decades of engineering credibility. Manufacturing excellence, market dominance and brand reputation offered no respite once flight safety was compromised.

The hospitality sector reveals similar fragility. Marriott's global success was built on service excellence and brand trust, yet a cybersecurity breach exposed the personal data of hundreds of millions of guests, leading to a major setback. The failure was not in customer experience but in digital security—an invisible but essential foundation in modern service ecosystems.

Public transport systems, often seen as engineering triumphs, are equally vulnerable. The collapse of the UK's Railtrack followed fatal accidents caused by weak maintenance governance. Passenger service excellence could not compensate for failures in safety oversight. In India, even a well-run train service can be judged harshly if basic amenities such as water or functional toilets are missing. Passenger trust is anchored not only in overall performance but also in the maintenance of essential conditions.



Healthcare provides an even more sobering illustration. Hospitals may possess advanced technology and skilled doctors, yet remain vulnerable to failures in sanitation, oxygen supply, or protocol compliance. During the COVID-19 crisis, several well-equipped hospitals faced tragedy and reputational damage not due to clinical incompetence but because oxygen logistics failed. In such systems, operational reliability is as vital as medical expertise.

Event management shows how reputational collapse can occur even faster. The Fyre Festival's marketing sophistication and celebrity endorsements created enormous expectations, but the absence of basic infrastructure—food, shelter and safety—turned it into a global symbol of failure. In India, a political rally in Karur, Tamil Nadu, organised for an actor-turned-politician, descended into chaos due to inadequate crowd regulation and safety planning. Despite strong mobilisation and public enthusiasm, a single weak link—poor crowd management—resulted in injuries, casualties and public criticism. The lesson is clear: visibility amplifies consequences when foundational safety systems are missing.

Fire safety failures offer an even starker warning. The Swiss Bar tragedy in Bengaluru, where a fire broke out in a crowded commercial establishment, exposed gaps in emergency exits, compliance enforcement and safety preparedness. The tragedy at a Swiss ski resort, where a fire broke out in a crowded lodge during the peak tourist season, exposed serious gaps in emergency exits, evacuation planning and safety preparedness. Despite Switzerland's reputation for strict regulations, the incident showed that compliance on paper does not always translate into readiness on the ground. Businesses may comply with multiple operational standards, but if fire safety systems fail, the consequences are immediate and severe. Regulatory checklists cannot substitute for real-world preparedness.

Digital commerce, despite its technological sophistication, is not immune to weak link failures. Target's massive data breach was triggered by a third-party security lapse, while Flipkart's early Big Billion Day disruptions were caused by system overload. Market leadership and customer loyalty

quickly eroded when platform reliability and data security—two non-negotiable conditions—were compromised.

Across these cases, the pattern is consistent. Organisations rarely collapse because strengths across various parameters are not very high. They fail because they neglect what must never fail.

Japanese production systems offer a useful contrast. Rather than celebrating isolated excellence, they prioritise process stability, early detection of anomalies and continuous reinforcement of weak points. Kaizen is not about dramatic transformation; it is about systematically reducing the probability of small failures becoming large ones. Poka-yoke mechanisms exist precisely to prevent human or technical errors from cascading into systemic crises.

Failure Modes & Effect Analysis (FMEA) operationalises this philosophy by confronting uncomfortable questions: Where could the system break? Which failure would cause the greatest harm? How visible would it be before damage occurs? The focus shifts from performance optimisation to risk containment.

Traditional dashboards highlight averages and growth metrics. For modern and complex service organisations, which cannot afford collapse, a change in managerial mindset is essential. Resilient systems also monitor thresholds, near-misses and exceptions. Customer complaints, feedback from frontline staff, minor safety incidents and operational anomalies are not inconveniences to be avoided; they are diagnostic signals that reveal structural vulnerabilities waiting to convert into disasters if ignored for too long.

In service ecosystems, the most dangerous risks often lie backstage and inconspicuous. A malfunctioning water pump in a train coach, an inadequately protected server in an e-commerce platform, a missing sterilisation protocol in a hospital, or an untrained security staff member at a public event can all trigger cascading consequences. These are not minor operational details. They are the system's load-bearing elements.

The Anna Karenina Principle reminds us that success has a common architecture. Safety, trust, hygiene and coordination form its foundation. Each failure, by contrast, is peculiar, shaped by whichever essential condition collapses first.

In an age of instant media scrutiny and social amplification, the margin for error has narrowed sharply. Reputational damage spreads faster than operational recovery. Structural resilience, not surface-level excellence, now determines long-term credibility.

Tolstoy's insight endures because it captures a universal truth about all complex systems. Success is fragile as it requires performance across multiple dimensions while also preventing weak-link failures. And any such failure is unforgiving.■

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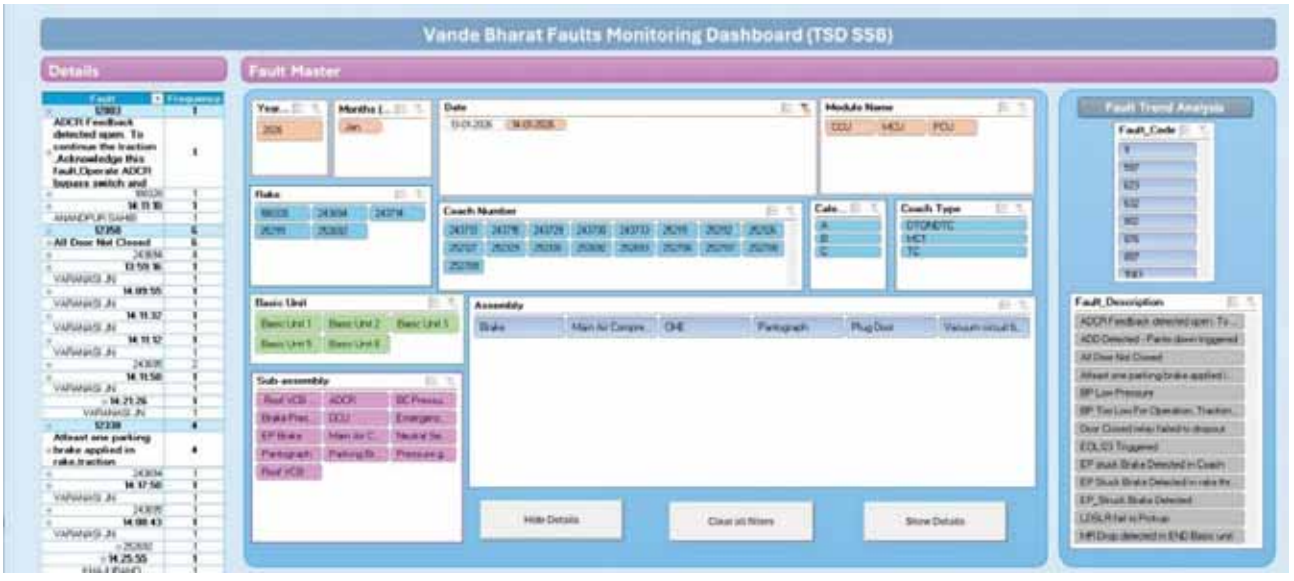
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Excellence in Vande Bharat Maintenance through Digital Innovation

Modern Maintenance Practices at Trainset Depot, Shakurbasti

Chirag Srivastav
Divisional Mechanical Engineer,
Trainset Depot SSB, NR

"Northern Railway Trainset Depot, Shakurbasti, has developed India's first in-house real-time fault monitoring system for Vande Bharat trains. The system delivers cost-effective, reliable and adaptive fault management, without reliance on external vendors. It empowers staff, streamlines workflows and sets a precedent for self-reliance across Indian Railways. With predictive maintenance underway, the depot is ensuring world-class safety and reliability. Strengthening its digital innovation journey, the depot has successfully created the VBMM mobile application entirely in-house."

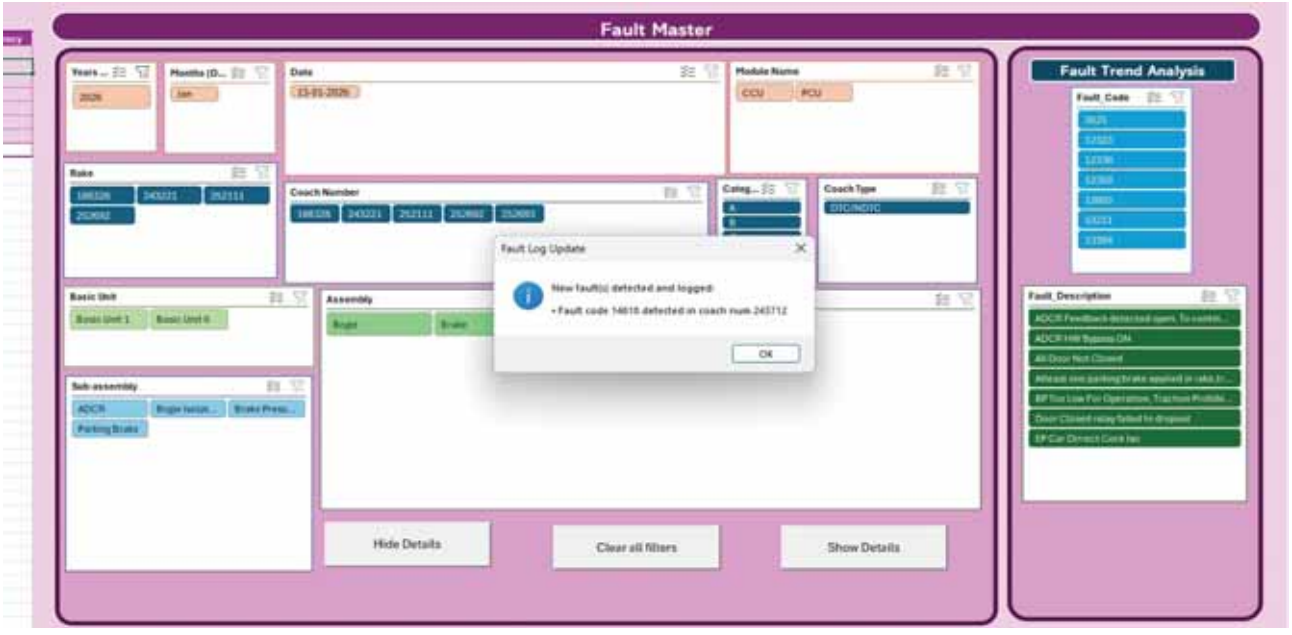


Software Dashboard

Addressing a Critical Gap in Maintenance Monitoring

Trainset Depot, Shakurbasti was the first depot in Indian Railways to begin maintaining Vande Bharat trains. Over the past six years, the depot has pioneered not only routine schedules but also heavy repairs, enabling Northern Railway to keep these flagship trains running with safety and reliability. The dedication and hard work of Team SSB have been vital in sustaining Vande Bharat's performance, yet the increasing complexity of maintenance created a pressing need for a structured, reliable system to manage faults. The valuable experience and expertise in maintaining Vande Bharat trainsets for more than five years proved indispensable in developing the system.

The website provided by the OEM lacked the ability to generate alerts for critical faults. Staff were required to continuously monitor screens, manually distinguish between critical and non-critical alerts and sift through a constant stream of momentary messages and logs. This process was cumbersome, prone to errors and placed unnecessary strain on monitoring personnel. To address this gap, an in-house solution was developed under the direction of PCME NR, Sh. Dimpy Garg, that fundamentally restructured fault



Fault Pop-up alerts

monitoring. The new programme automatically generates pop-up alerts for critical faults, logs them separately and presents them through a dashboard that categorises faults by rake, basic unit, coach number, module, assembly and sub-assembly. With the ability to preserve data for two to three years without requiring a separate database, the system ensures that fault histories can be retrieved easily, patterns can be analysed and equipment health can be monitored with precision. This development transformed fault monitoring from a manual, error-prone process into a structured, reliable and efficient system.

The Case for In-House Development

The decision to develop this solution internally was driven by practical challenges and an urge to innovate. Several firms were approached to design similar systems, but external engineers struggled to grasp the complex network of railway maintenance requirements. Communication gaps, lack of domain expertise and unsatisfactory final outputs made outsourcing impractical. Despite initial promises of acceptable results, the trial products delivered by vendors after numerous consultations consistently fell short of expectations. Acknowledging these limitations, the initiative to build the software in-house was undertaken.

This approach ensured that the solution was tailored precisely to the needs of railway operations. It also fostered self-sufficiency, reducing reliance on external vendors and empowering the depot to innovate independently. TSD Shakurbasti thus became the first depot in Indian Railways to successfully develop and implement such a system internally, setting a precedent for other units. This achievement demonstrated that with the right expertise and determination, complex challenges could be solved effectively within the organisation itself.

Advantages of the In-House System

The benefits of this in-house development are both practical and strategic. First and foremost, it eliminated the high costs typically charged by external firms. By leveraging internal expertise, the system was developed at no additional expense, making it a cost-effective solution that delivered significant value. Importantly, there are no recurring AMC costs for various paid features that are often bundled with database analysis tools in the market. This ensures that the depot remains free from long-term financial commitments while still enjoying advanced functionality.

Flexibility is another key advantage. The system can easily accommodate new developments, such as the addition of new rakes, without requiring separate databases for identification. Faults newly identified during operations can be configured into the system seamlessly, ensuring that it remains relevant and adaptable over time.

The categorization of faults down to the assembly and sub-assembly level enables maintenance teams to detect abnormal behaviour in equipment early, allowing timely interventions and reducing the risk of major failures.

This structured approach has made maintenance monitoring more reliable, efficient and responsive. Staff no longer need to manually sift through logs and critical issues are highlighted automatically. The system has streamlined workflows, reduced manual effort and enhanced accuracy, creating a more resilient maintenance ecosystem that supports the operational excellence of Vande Bharat trains.

Impact on Maintenance Culture and Operations

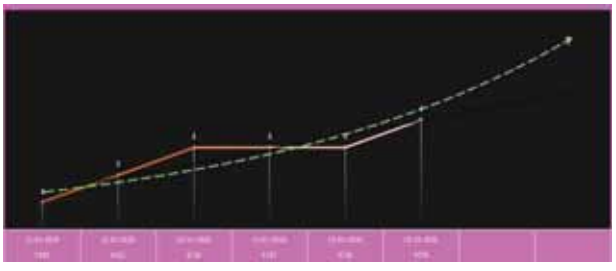
Beyond technical improvements, the system has reshaped the culture of maintenance management. With the simplified workflows and reduced manual effort, staff can now focus on superior quality of work with an aim to achieve an efficient and failure-free system.

It has fostered innovation and ownership, with trained staff using data analysis to troubleshoot issues, identify fault patterns and draw long-term insights. This empowerment has built pride and responsibility, proving that effective solutions can come from within.

Operationally, maintenance monitoring is now streamlined, enabling quick follow-ups and long-term visibility into equipment health. Categorisation at multiple levels allows timely interventions, reducing service disruptions and enhancing the reliability of Vande Bharat trains as a symbol of modern Indian Railways.

Setting a Precedent for Self-Reliance and Future Innovation

The real-time fault monitoring system developed in-house at the depot represents more than just a technical achievement; it is a symbol of self-reliance and innovation. By addressing a critical gap in maintenance monitoring, the system has delivered tangible improvements in reliability, efficiency and cost-effectiveness. By choosing to develop the solution internally, the depot has demonstrated that complex challenges can be solved effectively without reliance on external vendors.



Fault pattern along with trend line

This achievement sets a precedent for other units within Indian Railways, showing that innovation and self-sufficiency are not only possible but also highly effective. The system has created a holistic ecosystem of efficiency, where fault monitoring, data preservation, categorization and analysis work together to support operational excellence. The legacy of this contribution lies not in the tools themselves but in the sustained improvements they deliver—systems that continue to optimize resources, strengthen governance and align operations with global benchmarks.

Digitising Repair Reporting and Supervisor Accountability

In addition to the real-time fault monitoring system, the depot has also achieved another milestone by developing the VBMM (Vande Bharat Maintenance Monitoring) mobile application in-house. This innovation has replaced the earlier manual process where book repairs were reported via WhatsApp and manually entered into Google Sheets by the monitoring team.

Key highlights of this achievement include:

- Role-based login: Only the concerned supervisor from the responsible department can fill the Action Taken remarks, ensuring accountability.
- Automated integration: Entries made in the application update Google Sheets instantly, eliminating tedious manual work.
- Pending repairs tracking: The app displays unresolved tasks in real time, making follow-ups easier.
- Workload reduction: Monitoring teams no longer maintain separate sheets or chase supervisors for updates.
- In-house innovation: The depot demonstrated its ability to design and deploy digital solutions independently.
- Tablets provisioned: To make the system

efficiently work right from the grassroots level, the onboard staff in all trains of SSB depot have been provided with Tablets enabling immediate fault reporting during the journey itself.

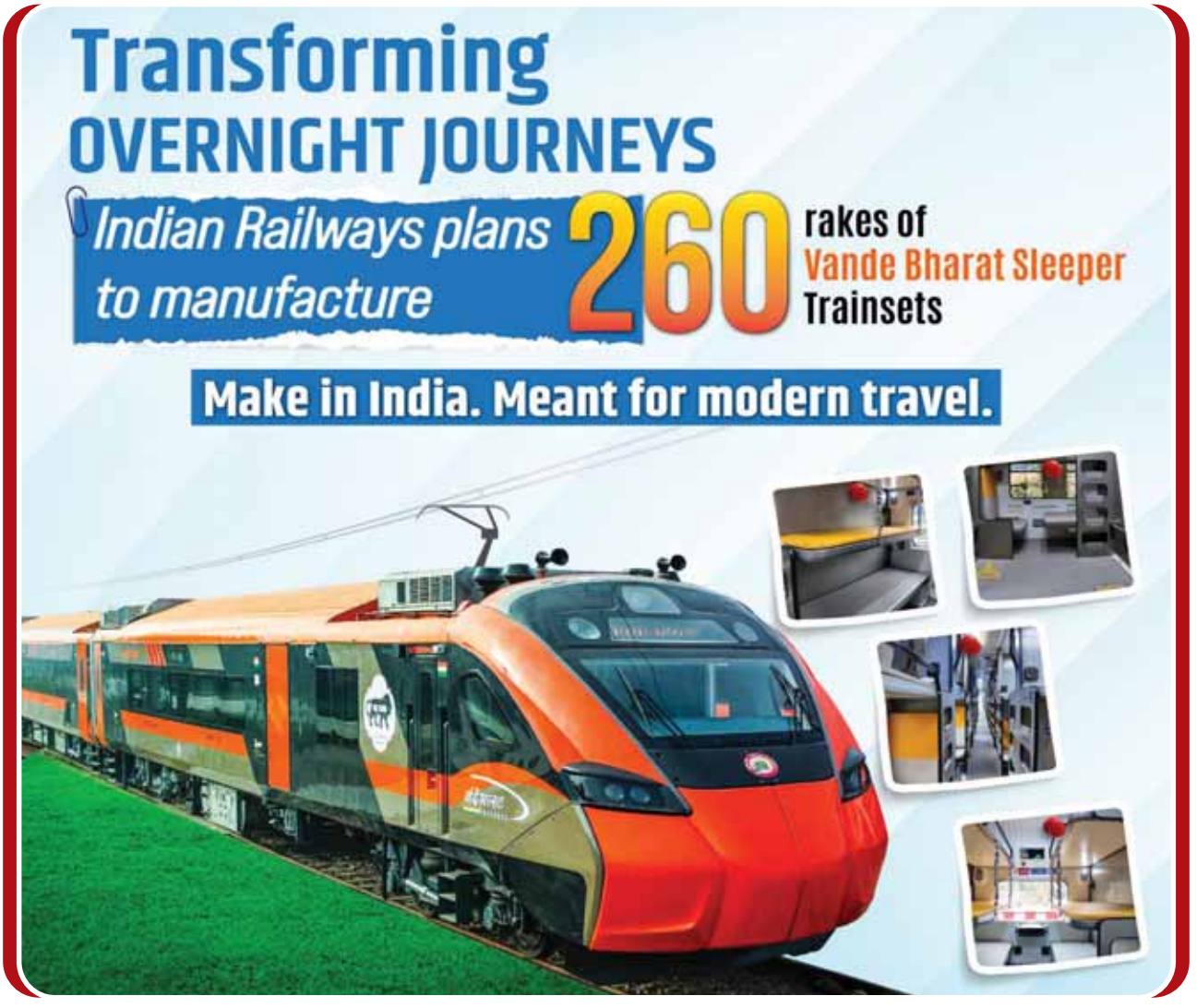
This achievement has streamlined communication, minimised duplication of effort and empowered supervisors with clear responsibility for repair actions. It represents another step forward in the depot's journey toward digital transformation and operational excellence.

Future Roadmap: Towards Intelligent Maintenance

Importantly, the system is not static—it is continuously evolving. Each day brings enhancements that improve its functionality, adaptability and user-friendliness. Building on this foundation, the depot has set its sights on integrating advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence into its workflows, with a long-term vision of progressing towards predictive maintenance.

By harnessing AI, the system will move beyond categorizing and logging faults to anticipating potential failures before they occur, enabling truly proactive interventions. Early groundwork in this direction is already underway and the team remains committed to refining the system step by step.

The aspiration is to transform maintenance monitoring from a reactive process into a forward-looking, intelligent framework that ensures the highest standards of safety and reliability for Vande Bharat trains. With determination, innovation and a culture of self-reliance, the Depot is confident that this vision will steadily take shape and set new benchmarks for Indian Railways.■





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TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. How much capital expenditure has been allocated to Indian Railways in the Union Budget 2026–27?

(a) ₹2.52 lakh crore (b) ₹2.93 lakh crore

(c) ₹3.50 lakh crore (d) ₹4.50 lakh crore

2. What percentage of the total capital allocation for FY 2025–26 had been utilised by December 2025?

(a) 20 percent (b) 65 percent

(c) 70 percent (d) 80 percent

3. How many high-speed rail corridors have been announced in the Union Budget?

(a) Two (b) Four

(c) Seven (d) None

4. Between which locations has the construction of a new Dedicated Freight Corridor been announced in the Budget?

(a) Dankuni–Surat (b) Dankuni–Guwahati

(c) Pune–Hyderabad (d) Delhi–Varanasi

5. From which railway station did the Prime Minister flag off the first Vande Bharat Sleeper train?

(a) Howrah (b) Malda Town

(c) Kanpur (d) Jaipur

6. Between which two cities is the first Vande Bharat Sleeper train operating?

(a) Kanpur–Jaipur (b) Ahmedabad–Mumbai

(c) Howrah–Guwahati (d) Malda–Howrah



7. How many Amrit Bharat Express services were inaugurated by the Prime Minister during various programmes in January 2026?

(a) 12 (b) 16

(c) 18 (d) 20

8. How many Rail Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Awards were presented by the Railway Minister?

(a) 56 (b) 100

(c) 126 (d) 156

9. How many years of railway electrification were completed by Indian Railways on 3 February 2026?

(a) 75 years (b) 99 years

(c) 110 years (d) 101 years

10. On which occasion did the Railway Minister recently release a commemorative postage stamp and coin?

(a) 100 years of railway electrification (b) Vande Bharat Sleeper

(c) Vande Bharat (d) Tejas Express

Right Answers

1- (b) 2- (d) 3- (c) 4- (a) 5- (b) 6- (c) 8- (b) 7- (d) 9- (d) 10- (a)



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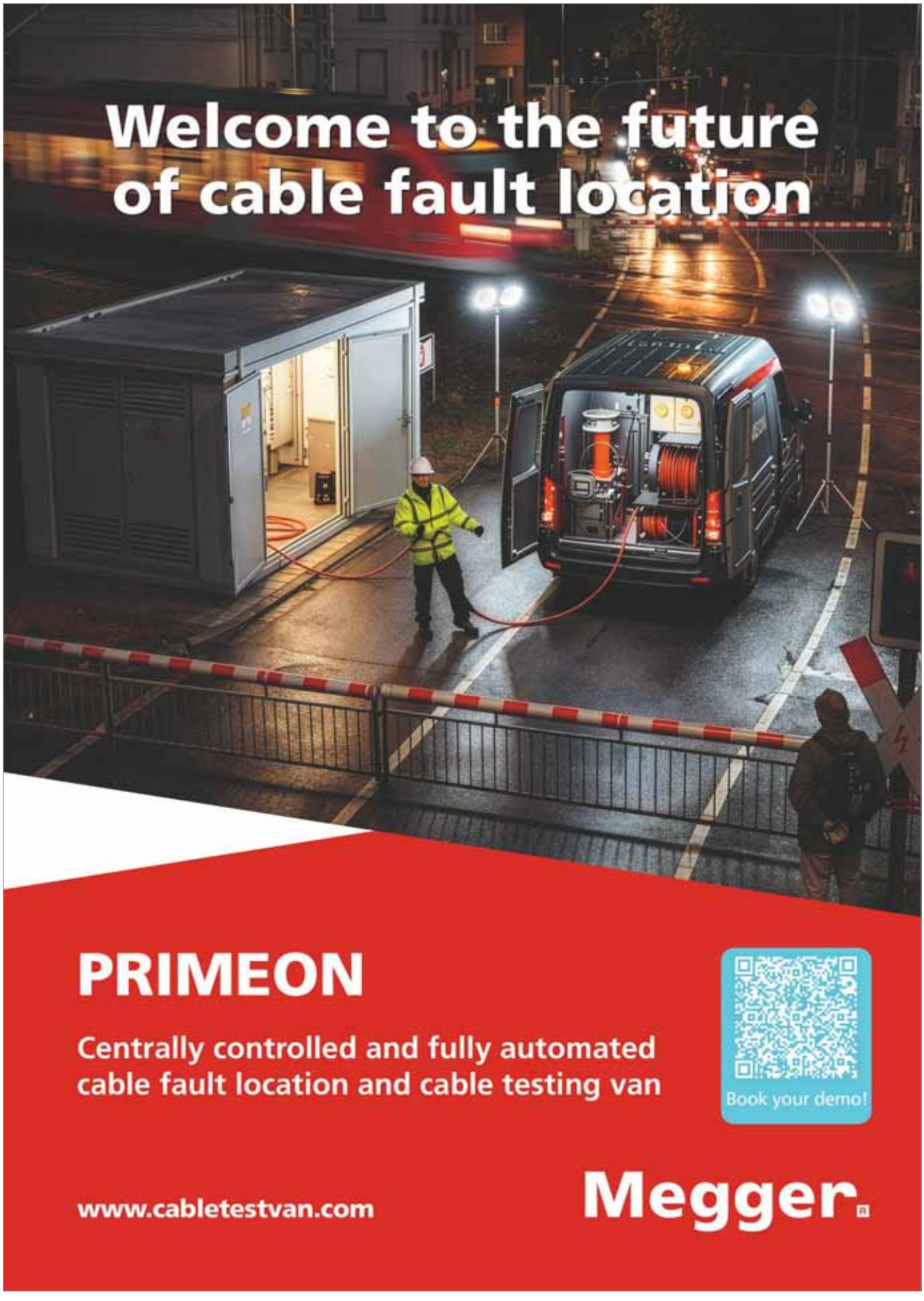


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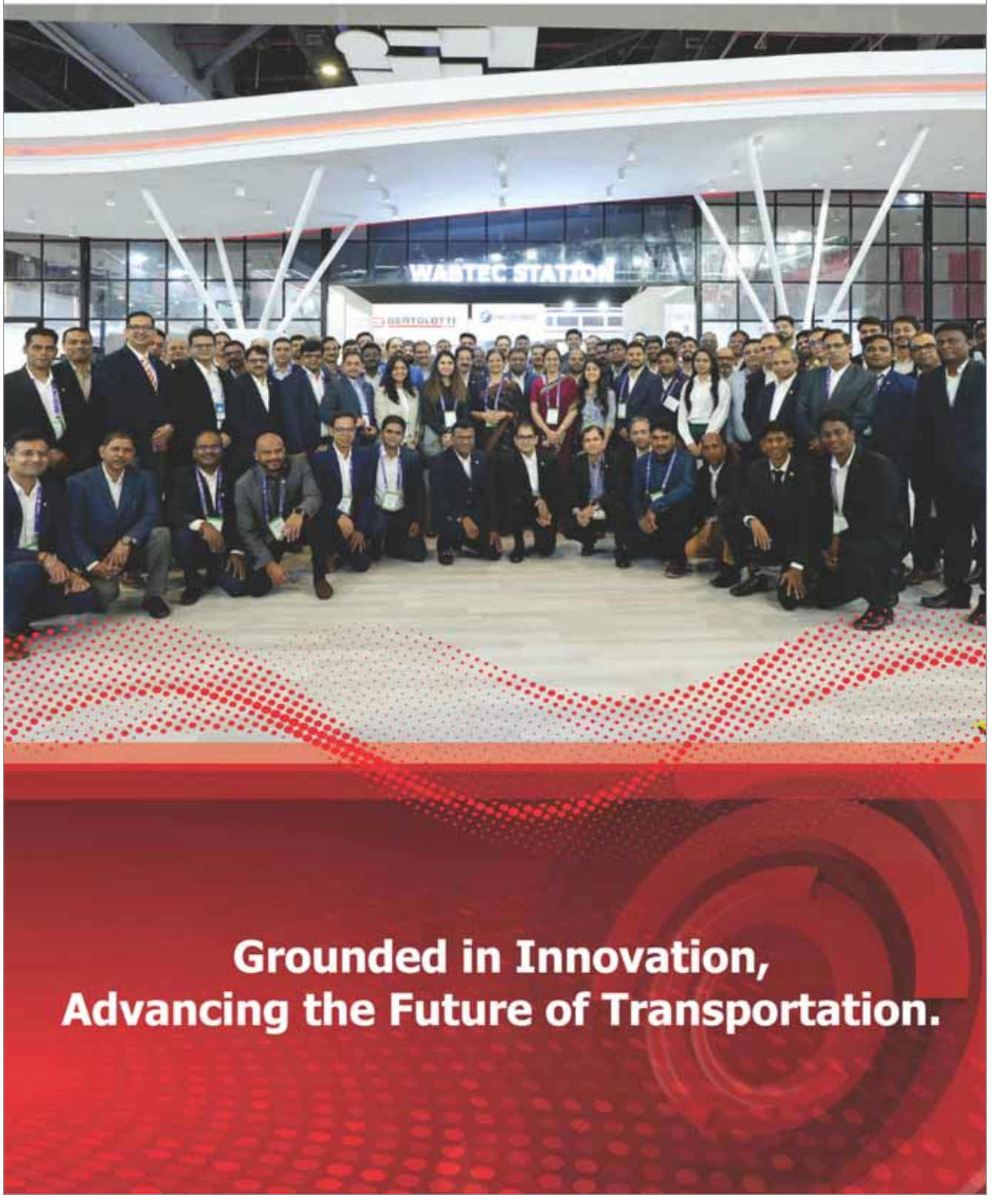
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