

INDIAN RAILWAY BUDGET 2015-16

The Union Railway Budget for 2015-16 was presented by Mr Suresh Prabhu, Union Minister for Railways, Government of India, on February 26, 2015.

Budget Highlights:

- Indian Railways to become prime mover of economy once again and envisaged Highest ever plan outlay of 65,445 cr.
- Railways to continue to be the preferred mode of transport for the masses.
- Make Rail a safer means of travel.
- Expand Bhartiya Rail's capacity substantially and modernise infrastructure. Increase daily passenger carrying capacity from **21 million to 30 million, increase track length by 20 per cent from 114,000 km to 138,000 km** and increase annual freight carrying capacity from **1 billion tonnes (BT) to 1.5 BT**.
- Target to make Indian Railway financially self-sustainable. Generate large surpluses from operations not only to service the debt needed to fund India's capacity expansion, but also to invest on an on-going basis to replace our depreciating assets.
- Indian Railways envisages investment of Rs **8.5 trillion (US\$ 137.28 billion)** over the next five years to be mobilized from multiple sources to cater to funding i.e. **multilateral development banks, pension funds**.
- **Gross Budgetary Support of Rs 40,000 crore (US\$ 6.46 billion) for the Railway's Annual Plan. Rs 1,645.60 crore (US\$ 265.79 million)** has also been provided as Railway's share of diesel cess from the Central Road Fund. Market borrowing under EBR projected at Rs 17,655 crore (US\$ 2.85 billion), an increase of about 46.5 per cent.
- **Plan Budget up by 52 per cent from Rs 65,798 crore (US\$ 10.63 billion) to Rs 100,011 crore (US\$ 16.15 billion) in 2015-16.** Support from the Central Government 41.6 per cent of the Plan and internal generation 17.8 per cent; setting up of a Financing Cell in the Railway Board.
- **Targeted operating ratio for 2015-16 at 88.5 per cent against 91.8 per cent in 2014-15: best in the last 9 years.**
- No increase in passenger fares.
- New department for cleanliness, integrated cleaning by engaging professional agencies and staff training, 'waste to energy' conversion plants, new toilets covering 650 additional stations compared to 120 stations last year.
- Passengers without reservations **can book tickets in 5 minutes.**
- **Hand-held terminals to Travelling Ticket Examiners (TTEs)** for verification of passengers and downloading charts.
- Introduction of a centrally managed **Railway Display Network** across 2,000 stations in next two years.
- **"SMS Alert"** service to inform passengers in advance of the updated arrival/departure time of trains at starting or destination stations.
- Surveillance cameras provided on a pilot basis in selected mainline coaches and ladies' compartments of suburban coaches without intruding into privacy.
- Project for introducing on-board entertainment on select **Shatabdi trains** on license fee basis launched.
- 200 more stations to come under **Adarsh Station scheme**. Wi - Fi to be provided at B category stations.

- **77 projects covering 9,400 km** of doubling/tripling/quadrupling works along with electrification, covering almost all States, at a cost of Rs 96,182 crore (US\$ 15.53 billion) which is over 2700 per cent higher in terms of amount sanctioned.
- **In the North East States, Meghalaya to be brought on the Railway map of India** and to be directly connected to **Delhi. Barak Valley to be connected.**
- Acceleration of pace of Railway electrification: 6,608 route kilometers sanctioned for 2015-16, an increase of **1330 per cent over the previous year.**
- **Transport Logistics Corporation of India (TRANSLOC)**, to be set up for developing common user facilities with handling and value-added services to provide end-to-end logistics solution at select Railway terminals through **public-private partnerships (PPP).**
- **Speed of 9 railway corridors to be increased from existing 110 and 130 kmph to 160 and 200 kmph** respectively, so that inter-metro journeys like Delhi-Kolkotta and Delhi-Mumbai can be completed overnight.
- Feasibility study for **High Speed Rail between Mumbai-Ahmedabad** is at an advanced stage and report is expected by mid-2015. For other high speed routes on the diamond quadrilateral, studies are being commissioned.
- **'Foreign Rail Technology Cooperation scheme'** to be launched.
- **Solar Power as part of the Solar Mission of Railways.** 1,000 megawatt (MW) solar plants will be set up by developers on Railway/private land and Railway buildings with subsidy/viability gap funding support of Ministry of Non-Renewable Energy in next five years.
- **Incredible Rail for Incredible India** to be launched. Promotion of training of auto-rickshaw and taxi-operators as tourist-guides on the model of **Konkan Railway.**
- **IRCTC to work on promoting the Gandhi circuit to attract tourists to mark the occasion of 100 years of the return of Mahatma Gandhi to India from South Africa.** IRCTC to work on **Kisan Yatra**, a special travel scheme for farmers for farming & marketing technique centres.
- **Rail Tourism development**
 - Eco-Tourism and Education Tourism in Northeastern States to be promoted.
 - Special Packaged trains on identified pilgrim circuits like **Devi Circuit, Jyotirling Circuit, Jain Circuit, Christian Circuit, Muslim/Sufi Circuit, Sikh Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, Famous Temple Circuit, etc.**
 - Tourist Train from Gadag to Pandarpur via Bagalkot, Bijapur and Solapur covering the pilgrim and tourist places of **Karnataka and Maharashtra.**
 - Tourist Train from **Rameshwaram** covering pilgrim and tourist places like **Bengaluru, Chennai, Ayodhya, Varanasi and Haridwar.**
 - Special Train featuring life and work of **Swami Vivekananda.**