

Rail Budget Seeks Course Correction, Avoids Populism
No Increase in Rail Fare
Stress on Resource Mobilization Through PSU Surplus, FDI and PPP

Bullet Train on Ahmedabad-Mumbai Corridor Proposed, Speed of Trains to be Increased in Nine Sectors

More Thrust on Passenger Amenities, Cleanliness & Efficient Station Management

Multi Pronged Approach for Improving Safety & Security, 4000 Women RPF Constables to be Recruited

Revamping Railway Reservation System into Next Generation e-Ticketing, WI-FI Services in Major Stations & in Select Trains, Mobile based Wakeup Calls for Passengers

58 New Trains Introduced; 11 Existing Trains Extended

Railway University and Innovation Incubation Centre to be Set UP

Top Priority to Transparency, e-procurement to be made Compulsory in Higher Purchase, Online Registration for Wagons in Next Two Months

Highest Ever Plan Outlay of Rs. 65,445 Crore with Higher Allocation for Safety Measures

Increased passenger amenities, more safety measures, timely completion of projects and increased financial discipline are the main highlights of the Railway Budget 2014-15 presented by the Minister of Railways Shri D. V. Sadananda Gowda in Parliament today.

The Budget seeks course correction in the light of mismanagement, apathy, populism in starting projects and severe fund crunch that have inflicted the railways over the years, the Minister averred. For this, structural reforms will be introduced and resources will be mobilized through PSU surplus, FDI and PPP.

The Budget proposes multi-pronged approach to make Railway journey safe and secure and comfortable for passengers. More thrust has been placed on passenger amenities, cleanliness and efficient station management. Now all major stations will have foot-over bridges, escalators, lifts etc.

On safety and security, the Budget has proposed introduction of advance technology for rail-flaw detection to check causes of accidents, a significant amount has been kept for road-over and road-under bridges and a pilot project will be launched on automatic door closing in mainline and sub-urban coaches. In order to make women safer while travelling, the Railway will recruit 4000 women constables. Coaches for ladies will be escorted.

IT initiatives get a big boost in the Budget. Revamping Railway Reservation System into Next Generation e-Ticketing will be taken up with provision of platform tickets and unreserved tickets also over internet. The Railway has proposed real-time tracking of trains and rolling stocks, mobile based Wakeup Call System for passengers, mobile based destination arrival alert and Wi-fi Services in A-1 and A category stations and in select trains. Indian Railways has also planned paperless offices in 5 years.

In order to make Railway management more efficient, Budget has proposed setting up of Railway University for training in both technical and non-technical subjects besides

establishing Innovations and Incubation Centre to harness the ideas generated from staff.

In a bid to modernise Indian Railway network, Bullet train has been proposed on Mumbai-Ahmadabad sector besides increasing speed of trains to 160-200 kmph in select 9 sectors. The Railway has also planned setting up of Diamond Quadrilateral Network of High Speed Rail connecting major metros and growth centers of the country. Identified stations will be developed to international standards with modern facilities on lines of newly developed airports through PPP mode. Railway has also proposed harnessing solar energy by utilizing roof top spaces of stations, railway buildings and land.

To augment resources of Railways, the Budget has proposed schemes to facilitate procurement of parcel vans and rakes by private parties, special milk tanker trains, increased movement of fruits and vegetables in partnership with Warehousing Corporation and setting up Private Freight Terminals on PPP model.

The Railway has proposed to bring in more transparency in administration and execution of projects. The status of ongoing projects will be available online, E-procurement will be made compulsory for procurement of higher amount and online registration of demands for wagons will be introduced within next two months.

The Budget has passenger centric focus on suburban and metropolitan rail services. 864 additional state-of-the-art EMUs will be introduced in Mumbai in two years. Study to explore possibility of enhancing existing railway network for better connectivity needs of Bangaluru will be taken up.

The Railway Budget 2014-15 has proposed 58 new trains besides extending 11 existing trains. Provision has been made for 28 surveys for new lines and doubling or gauge conversion of lines. Higher funds have been proposed for ongoing projects in Northeast and remote areas. Special packaged trains on identified pilgrim circuits, two tourist trains and a special train featuring life and work of Swami Vivekananda has been proposed in the Budget.

According to the Budget estimates, the Railways will earn ₹ 1,64,374 crore through various resources and will spend ₹ 1,49,176 crore during 2014-15. The operating ratio is expected to be 92.5% which is 1% better than that in 2013-14.