Railway Budget 2015-16: Quality of Life in Journeys

Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu on 26 February 2015 presented his maiden Rail Budget 2015-16 in the Lok Sabha. This was also the second rail budget of the Narendra Modi-led NDA government.

PROPOSED INVESTMENT PLAN (2015-2019)

Item	Amount (Rs in crore)
Network Decongestion (including DFC, Electrification, Doubling including electrification and traffic facilities)	199320
Network Expansion (including electrification)	193000
National Projects (North Eastern & Kashmir connectivity projects)	39000
Safety (Track renewal, bridge works, ROB, RUB and Signalling & Telecom)	127000
Information Technology / Research	5000
Rolling Stock (Locomotives, coaches, wagons – production & maintenance)	102000
Passenger Amenities	12500
High Speed Rail & Elevated corridor	65000
Station redevelopment and logistic parks	100000
Others	13200
TOTAL	8,56,020

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Four goals for Indian Railways to transform over next five years

• To deliver a sustained and measurable improvement in customer experience.
• To make Rail a safer means of travel.
• To expand Bhartiya Rail's capacity substantially and modernise infrastructure: for this purpose daily passenger carrying capacity will be increased from 21 million to 30 million. Track length will also be increased by 20 percent from 114000 km to 138000 km. Annual freight carrying capacity will be grown from 1 billion to 1.5 billion tonnes.
• To make Bhartiya Rail financially self-sustainable.

Key Highlights of the Railway Budget 2015-16

• No increase in passenger fares
• Passengers can book tickets 120 days in advance instead of 60 days which was available till date
• Outlay for passenger amenities increased by 67 percent
• New train sets that can save 20 percent journey time will be introduced in future. These trains will be similar to bullet trains in design but can run on the existing tracks
• The speed passenger trains across nine corridors will be increased to 160-200 km from 110 km
• SMS alert will be introduced for train timings and under this passengers will be informed in advance the updated arrival or departure time of the trains at starting or destination stations
• Air-conditioned coaches for suburban trains will be introduced
• Wi-fi will be available at 400 railway stations
• Railways Intends to set up an Innovation Council called Kayakalp for Purpose of Business Re-Engineering
• Railways Proposes to set up Malaviya Chair for Railway Technology at IIT (BHU), Varanasi
• Bidding system will be used for redevelopment of stations
• 10 satellite railway stations will be developed in 2015-16
• 800 km of gauge conversion will be commissioned
• E-catering introduced in 108 trains can be accessed by ordering on IRCTC website
• Water vending machines will be expanded on more stations
• On–board entertainment facility will be extended on Shatabdi trains
• General class coaches will see introduction of mobile charging stations
• For benefit of the common man, more general class coaches will be added to select trains
• Pension funds, multi-lateral banks have evinced interest in Railways
• Proposed the best operating ratio in nine years, of 88.5 per cent for 2015-16
• Track capacity will be increased by 10 percent to 1.38 lakh kilometers
• Feasibility report of high speed train between Mumbai and Ahmedabad is expected by mid-2015
• To ease private investment, wagon-making scheme will be reviewed
• All India 24x7 grievances helpline 138 will be started
• Bio-toilets will replace more than 7000 toilets, while 650 stations will get new toilets
• Passenger travelling unreserved can produce a ticket within 5 minutes and for this purpose Operation Five Minutes will be introduced

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• To address complaints of people Mobile application is being developed
• Integrated tickets will be introduced
• Hand-held devices will be introduced for ticket checkers; it is move towards paperless ticketing
• In next 2 years, centrally managed railway display network will be introduced in over 2000 stations
• Rail-cum-road ticket to be extended in many stations
• Rail connectivity will be enhanced in North Eastern states
• To aid expanding freight handling capacity and provide end-to-end logistic solutions, Transport Logistic Corporation of India will be set up
• PPP model will be used to augment resources and generate more employment
• 6608 kilometer of track will be electrified
• 96182 crrore rupees will be spent to expand capacity of 9420 km rail lines
• For women safety, CCTVs will be introduced in selected trains and suburban trains
• Train Protection Warning System and Train Collision Avoidance System will be installed on select routes at the earliest
• Projects for rail connectivity to many ports and mines
• Foreign Rail Technology Cooperation Scheme will be launched in order to achieve the higher quality service
• Programme to improve design, quality and cleanliness of bed linen will be launched within the next six months

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In the budget, Prabhu gave 11 thrust areas to improve quality of life in train journeys which also includes Swachh Rail - Swachh Bharat drive. The 11 thrust areas include

Cleanliness

- Swachh Rail - Swachh Bharat campaign
- New department for cleanliness
- Integrated cleaning by engaging professional agencies and training our staff
- Waste to energy conversion plants
- New toilets covering 650 additional stations compared to 120 stations in 2014
- Bio-toilets to be fitted in the coaches

Bed linen

- National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Delhi to design bed linen
- The facility of online booking of disposable bedrolls at select stations will be extended to all passengers through the IRCTC portal on payment basis

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Help-line

- Start a 24X7 helpline number 138 and a toll-free number 182 for security related complaints

Ticketing

- Operation Five Minutes to ensure Speedy Purchase of Tickets for Unreserved Class Passengers.
- Provision of modified hot-buttons, coin vending machines and single destination teller windows will be launched to reduce the transaction time.
- For the differently-abled travellers, a special initiative will be launched whereby they can purchase concessional e-tickets after one-time registration.
- Proposal to work towards developing a multi-lingual e-ticketing portal
- Some other facilities include introduction of integrated ticketing system on the lines of rail-cum-road tickets on Jammu – Srinagar route will be expanded.

Catering

- Integrate Best Food Chains for E-Catering
- Railway passengers to order their food through IRCTC website at the time of booking tickets

Leveraging technology

- Introduce hand-held terminals to Travelling Ticket Examiners (TTEs) for verification of passengers and downloading charts.
- Extending facility of SMS on mobiles as a valid proof of travel for PRS tickets
- SMS Alert service to inform passengers in advance of the updated arrival/departure time of trains at starting or destination stations

Surveillance

- Surveillance cameras will be provided on a pilot basis in selected mainline coaches and ladies' compartments of suburban coaches without intruding into privacy

Entertainment

- Project for introducing on-board entertainment on select Shatabdi trains on license fee basis
- Mobile phone charging facilities will be provided in general class coaches & its numbers will be increased in sleeper class coaches

Station facilities

- 200 more stations to come under Adarsh Station scheme
- Wi-Fi will be provided at B category station
- Facility of self-operated lockers to be made available at stations

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- Provision of concierge services will be introduced through IRCTC at major stations
- Online booking of wheel chair on payment basis for senior citizens, patients and the differently-abled passengers will be available through IRCTC on select stations

Train capacity

- Capacity in identified trains will be augmented to run with 26 coaches
- More General class coaches will be added in identified trains

Comfortable travel

- NID to design user friendly ladders for climbing to the upper berths
- Quota of lower berths for senior citizens will be increased
- Middle bay of coaches will be reserved for women and senior citizens
- NID will develop ergonomically designed seats
- Provision of 120 crore rupees for Lifts and escalator has been made
- The newly manufactured coaches will be Braille enabled
- Entrances will be widened to ease of differently-abled passengers
- Corporate houses & MPs requested to invest in improving passenger amenities at Railway stations through CSR & MPLAD funds

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In this regard, Railway Budget 2015 – 16 unveiled certain initiatives ranging from cleanliness drive to development of infrastructure to improving the overall quality of life in train journeys.

The major initiatives undertaken in the Railway Budget 2015-16

Station Redevelopment

- Zonal and Divisional offices to be empowered for quicker decision making
- Development of 10 Satellite Railway terminals in major cities with twin purpose of decongesting the city and providing service to suburban passengers

Network expansion

- Fast-track sanctioned works on 7000 kms of double/third/fourth lines
- Commission of 1200 km of network in 2015-16 at an investment of 8686 crore rupees

Expansion of freight handling capacity

- Transport Logistics Corporation of India (TRANSLOC), to be set up for developing common user facilities to provide end-to-end logistics solution at select Railway terminals through Public Private Partnerships.
- Policy for Private Freight Terminals (PFT) to be revised.

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- Automatic Freight Rebate Scheme for traffic to be expanded
- Long haul freight operations to be used extensively and construction of long loop lines to be expedited.

Improving train speed

- Speed of 9 railway corridors to be increased from existing 110 and 130 kmph to 160 and 200 kmph respectively.
- Average speed of freight trains in empty and loaded conditions will be enhanced to 100 kmph for empty freight trains and 75 kmph for loaded trains.

Bullet train

- Feasibility study for High Speed Rail between Mumbai-Ahmadabad is in advanced stage.

Upgrading manufacturing capability

- Creation of job opportunities by upgrading the manufacturing capability and review of functioning of Indian Railways Production Units.
- Workshops for technological upgradation and enhancing productivity be undertaken to make them self-sustaining.

Safety

- RDSO to develop a suitable device with reliable power supply system based on theft-proof panels/batteries in consultation with Indian Space Research Organization using geo-spatial technology.
- Train Protection Warning System and Train Collision Avoidance System to be installed on selected routes at the earliest.
- Better welding techniques being promoted and digital type machines to replace analogue type machines.

Technology upgradation

- Constitution of an innovation council called Kayakalp for business re-engineering.
- Technology portal being constituted to invite innovative technological solutions.
- Research Centers to be set up in selected universities for fundamental research.

Partnerships for development

- PPP cell to be revamped to make it result oriented. Foreign Rail Technology Cooperation scheme to be launched.
- Joint ventures to be set up with States for focused project development, resource mobilization, land acquisition and monitoring of critical rail projects.

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Improvements to Management Processes and Systems

- Systems audit to be conducted for review of all processes and procedures.
- Constitution of a working group to modify present system of accounting, to ensure tracking of• expenditure to desired outcomes and Train operations to be audited.
- Paperless working in material management system to be expanded and Vendors to be integrated through Vendor Interface Management System.

Resource Mobilisation

- Support from the Central Government for 41.6 percent of the Plan and Internal generation of 17.8 percent for setting up of a Financing Cell in the Railway Board.
- Setting up an infrastructure fund, a holding company and a Joint Venture with an existing NBFC of a PSU with IRFC for raising long term debt from domestic as well as overseas sources.
- Digitized mapping of land records and responsibility fixing for encroachments.
- New strategy to tap latent advertising potential including offering stations and trains for corporate branding.
- Railways in partnership with ports will deliver rail connectivity to Nargol, Chharra, Dighi, Rewas and Tuna. Scrap disposal policy to be reviewed for speedier scrap disposal.

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Human Resources

- Human Resource Audit to be undertaken; Separate accounting head for HRD; ERP based Human Resource Management System.
- Setting up a full-fledged University during 2015-16 and Improved delivery of health services to employees

Energy and sustainability

- Environment Directorate to be constituted in Railway Board to give increased focus on environment management.
- Initiative likely to save at least 3000 crore rupees in next few years will be taken up. 1000 MW solar plants will be set up by the developers on Railway/private land.
- Water conservation mission will include water audit and expansion of water harvesting systems. 100 DEMUs to be enabled for dual fuel- CNG and diesel.
- Noise levels of locos to be at par with international norms and concerns related to wildlife will be addressed.

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Transparency and Governance initiatives

- System of on-line applications introduced for two categories of recruitment as a pilot project.
- All possible solutions be explored to address menace of corruption. E-procurement value chain to be expanded.

Social initiatives

- Infrastructure like stations and training centers to be made available for skill development.
- Promotion of products made by Self Help Groups, consisting mainly of women and youth on the model of Konkan Railway.

Tourism

- Incredible Rail for Incredible India to be launched and Promotion of training of auto-rickshaw and taxi-operators as tourist-guides on the model of Konkan Railway.
- Coaches in selected trains connecting major tourist destinations to travel agencies may be offered on a revenue sharing model.
- 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 will work on Kisan Yatra, a special travel scheme for farmers for farming & marketing technique centres.

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