

Jammu & Kashmir Witnesses Rapid Upgradation of Rail Tracks and Coaches

Deployment of Tamping and Ballast Cleaning Machines Ensures Safer, Smoother Rides for Passengers in Jammu & Kashmir

Indian Railways to Harness AI for Defect Detection, Improving Safety and Working Conditions for Track Staff, says Ashwini Vaishnaw

DEMU MEMU Coaches Operated in The Valley Are Being Brought to Lucknow Workshop in a Timebound Manner through New Rail Link for Their Periodic Overhauling & Equipping Them with Latest Passenger Amenities

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Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Railway Link project with Chenab and Anji bridges on 06th June 2025. It is a historic milestone in establishing connectivity between the Kashmir valley and Jammu.

Vande Bharat Express train between Katra and Srinagar has become an important mode of transportation on this route.

Track maintenance: Over and above the new train services, opening of this line has made a fundamental change in the ability to maintain rail tracks in Kashmir valley. The railway link has enabled movement of track maintenance machines to the Kashmir valley. Maintenance is now being done with modern machines, unlike manual maintenance earlier. This is leading to significant improvement in track quality.

Increased deployment of track machines: To strengthen track maintenance activities in the Kashmir valley, the deployment of machines has been augmented as follows:

1. A Tamping Machine has been deployed since early June, 2025. This machine packs the stone chips under the tracks to ensure proper alignment and stability of the tracks. It has so far tamped

approximately 88 km of track in the valley. This has improved the ballast cushion and will make the ride smooth.

2. Two Ballast Cleaning Machines (BCMs) have also been deployed. Ballast is the stone chip collection on tracks. It provides support to railway tracks. These machines are working in tandem and have deep-screened around 11.5 km track. Cleaner ballast leads to safer operation.
3. Two additional BCMs were sent to the valley in July, 2025. These machines have undertaken deep screening and have executed approximately 2.5 km of track.
4. To supplement the tamping and deep screening work by recouplement of ballast, 17 ballast rakes were sent and unloaded in Kashmir valley tracks from ballast depots at Kathua, Qazigund, Madhopur & Jind. Consequently, 19,000 cu m of ballasting was done.
5. Track Recording Car (TRC) and Oscillation Monitoring System (OMS) runs were also conducted in June, 2025 and July, 2025 respectively. The track quality has been assessed and track stretches requiring attention have been identified.

All these works have significantly improved track quality in the Kashmir valley.



(Tamping machine working in valley section)



(Ballast Cleaning Machine working in valley section)

Track upgradation throughout the country: Tracks are being upgraded across the country. Better tracks improve safety and ride quality. By early 2025, 78% of India's tracks have been upgraded to 110 kmph or more. This number was just 39% in 2014. This higher proportion should be seen in light of the rise in the total length of tracks in the last decade. Total length of tracks has increased to over 1 lakh km in 2025 from 79,342 km in 2014.

Improving working conditions for track maintenance staff: The Union Minister for Railways, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw said, "We will improve the track quality by significantly upgrading the track technology and maintenance practices. Modern track fittings, usage of track machines, ultra sound fracture detection machines, road cum rail vehicles, and integrated track measurement machines will make our track maintenance scientific. AI will be extensively used in detecting defects. These technological changes will substantially improve the working conditions for track maintenance staff."

New era of passenger coach upgradation in Jammu and Kashmir

Along with track upgradation, a paradigm shift has happened in the maintenance and upgradation of passenger coaches in Jammu and Kashmir.

Till the opening of Jammu-Srinagar rail link, there was no rail connectivity of Kashmir valley with the rest of the Indian Railway network. The DEMU/MEMU rakes in Kashmir valley could not be brought to the workshop for periodic maintenance and upgradation.

Periodic Overhauling (POH) was being done by transporting bogies from Budgam to Lucknow on road trailers. This was sub-optimal. For the first time, rakes from the valley have been brought to Lucknow through rail for POH.

The condition of all the rakes in Budgam is being improved in a timebound manner. The following rakes are undergoing maintenance and upgradation:

1. POH of one MEMU rake has been completed. The upgraded MEMU rake is now operational in the valley. POH of another MEMU rake is likely to be completed by the end of July, 2025.
2. POH of one DEMU rake has been completed at Charbagh workshop. Another DEMU rake is undergoing POH at Charbagh workshop. It is likely to be completed by the mid of August, 2025.
3. One more DEMU rake is undergoing renovation at Jalandhar shed. It is expected to be made operational by the end of July, 2025.

4. Four more DEMU rakes have been planned for upgradation at Charbagh workshop and Jalandhar shed.

The details of the upgradation works being carried out are as follows:

- Exterior PU Painting with anti-graffiti of the entire rake, with a new vibrant colour
- Fitting of bio tanks in toilets
- Fitting of new water raising pumps for proper functioning of toilets
- Repairing of seats and replacement with polycarbonate seats
- Provision of new standing handles
- Renewal of PVC flooring
- Buffing of all stainless steel items
- Repairing of all windows and ensuring hopper type windows
- Ensuring proper functioning of Public Address & Passenger Information System
- Provision of adequate power and automatic change over switch panel for supply to water raising apparatus. This will ensure uninterrupted operation of water raising apparatus even in the absence of generator supply in summer season.
- Provision of A & C type of mobile charging sockets (with inbuilt short circuit and overload protection) and modular switches for fans
- Overhauling and renewal of all fans and lights



(Upgraded DEMU rake)



(Upgraded MEMU rake)



(Upgraded coach interiors)

The upgradation works of passenger coaches in the Kashmir valley will be completed by 31st August, 2025. All rakes in service will be renovated and upgraded within this timeframe.

Indian Railways is often called the 'lifeline of the nation'. With the opening of Jammu-Srinagar rail line and the ongoing upgradation works, it will provide a new lifeline to Jammu and Kashmir.

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