

Indian Railways Provides Affordable Travel to 720 Crore Passengers Annually with 57,200 Non-AC Coaches and 54 Lakh Non-AC Seats

245 New Trains Introduced, 101 Services Extended, and Frequency of 8 Services Increased Across India in First Nine Months of FY 2025-26

65,000 Special Trains Operated and 767 Coaches Permanently Added Till Dec 2025

164 Vande Bharat Chair Car, 2 Vande Bharat Sleeper, 54 Amrit Bharat, and 4 Namo Bharat Rapid Rail Services Operational Across the Country

Indian Railways Passenger Fares Among Lowest Globally; Ordinary Class 2.5 Times Cheaper than Neighbouring Countries including Pakistan and Sri Lanka

Fares of Semi-High Speed Trains like Vande Bharat 9 Times Cheaper than Japan and 3 Times Cheaper than China

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During last 11 years (2014-2025), unprecedented infrastructure creation/augmentation works have been carried out in all transport sectors in the country. Progress achieved during this period under the key infrastructure sectors are as under:

Infrastructure Sector	Progress since 2014
National Highways	About 58,232 km long National Highways/Expressways has been added in the National Highways/Expressways network.
Railways	About 35,000 kms new railway tracks have been added.

Airports	90 nos. operational airports have been added.
Metro	848 km length and 21 more cities have been added in the Metro network.

Therefore, modal distribution is also changing accordingly to the change in infrastructure growth.

Non-AC coaches (General and sleeper coaches)

With a view to meet the demand of passengers travelling in unreserved coaches, Railways have significantly increased the facilities for passengers demanding general class travel. During the last financial year 2024-25 alone, 1250 general coaches have been utilised in various long-distance trains. In the current financial year (upto December 2025), 767 Coaches have been utilised for permanent augmentation.

To cater to the travel demand of the low and middle income families, Indian Railways have taken up manufacturing of 17,000 non-AC coaches (general/sleeper) over the next 5 years.

On IR, the percentage of non-AC coaches, is about 70% as indicated below:

Table 1: Distribution of coaches:

Non-AC coaches (general and sleeper)	~57,200	~70%
AC coaches	~25,000	~30%
Total coaches	~82,200	100%

The number of seats available for non-AC passengers has also increased. The current composition is as follows:

Distribution of seats:

Non-AC seats	~ 54 lakhs	~ 78%
AC seats	~ 15 lakhs	~ 22%
Total	~ 69 lakhs	100%

Further, to cater to the needs of passengers desirous of availing unreserved accommodation, Indian Railways (IR) operate unreserved non-AC passenger trains/ MEMU / EMU etc. for affordable travel, which are in addition to the unreserved accommodation (coaches) available in Mail/Express services.

Overall, the passenger patronage of Indian Railways is showing steady and rapid growth trend, with consistent increase recorded during as under:

Year	% growth w.r.t previous year
2022-23	~ 82% (previous year 2021-22 being Covid year)
2023-24	~8%

2024-25	~6%
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Due to higher availability of general coaches, the number of passengers traveling in general/ unreserved coaches has shown an increasing trend as shown below:

Passengers in general/unreserved coaches:

Year	Nos. of Passengers
2020-21	99 Cr (Covid year)
2021-22	275 Cr (Covid year)
2022-23	553 Cr
2023-24	609 Cr
2024-25	651 Cr

Moreover, to provide greater accommodation for the passengers using General and non-AC Sleeper Coaches, the extant policy regarding composition of Mail/Express trains provides for 12 (Twelve) General class & Sleeper class non- AC coaches and 08 (eight) AC-Coaches, in a train of 22 coaches, thereby providing greater accommodation for the passengers using General and non-AC Sleeper Coaches.

In its constant endeavour to provide additional accommodation to travelling passengers, during 2025-26 (up to December 2025) IR have introduced **245 trains services**, extended **101 train services** and frequency of **8 services** have also been increased.

New design Trainsets:

Indian Railways is focused on providing affordable, good quality services to all sections of society. IR have developed and introduced the following trains:

1. Vande Bharat services (Chair Car):

Indian Railways, with a view to improve travel experience of the passengers, have introduced indigenously designed and manufactured Vande Bharat trains with modern coaches, advanced safety features and passenger amenities. Presently, 164 Vande Bharat train services (Chair Car) are being operated on the Indian Railways network.

2. Vande Bharat Sleeper Service:

To improve travel experience of the long journey passengers and set new benchmarks in terms of safe and comfortable journey, Vande Bharat Sleeper trains are provided with modern coaches having advanced safety features and passenger amenities. Presently, 02 Vande Bharat Sleeper services are being operated on the Indian Railways network.

3. Amrit Bharat service:

To provide affordable means of transportation to the low and middle income families, Indian Railways have introduced Amrit Bharat services that are fully non-AC modern trains. The present composition of Amrit Bharat consists of 11 General Class coaches, 8 Sleeper Class coaches, 01 Pantry car and 02 Luggage cum Divyangjan coaches. Increased speed and enhanced safety standards are the hallmarks of these trains. Presently, 54 Amrit Bharat Express services are being operated on the Indian Railways network.

4. Namo Bharat Rapid Rail service

Indian Railways have introduced Namo Bharat Rapid Rail services. These services are aimed to enhance the travel experience to the suburban and regional commuters for short distance travel. Presently, 4 Namo Bharat Rapid Rail services are in operation.

Special trains

IR also operates Special train services during festivals, holidays, etc. to cater to the extra needs of passengers and supplement the accommodation available by regular services.

Accordingly, the number of Special trains operated across the Indian Railways network, to facilitate the passengers during Summer/winter vacations, festivals like Holi, Durga Puja, Diwali, Chhath, Christmas, Sabrimala, Id-ul-fitr etc. are as below:

Year	No. special train trips
2023-24	~40,500
2024-25	~85,400

IR also operates Special train services during festivals, holidays, etc. to cater to the extra needs of passengers and supplement the accommodation available by regular services. In addition to the above, the load of trains are also augmented, both on a permanent and temporary basis, to generate additional accommodation for different segments of passengers. **Accordingly, during Year 2025-26 (till December 2025), approximately 65,000 special trains have been operated and 767 coaches have been utilized for augmentation of train services on a permanent basis.**

The rationalised fare structure has facilitated the wider expansion of these services across the country reflecting strong passenger demand for these services. Vande Bharat services have high occupancy level on all major routes with occupancy of Vande Bharat near 100% demonstrating a change in passenger preferences.

Indian Railways provides affordable transportation service to more than 720 crore passengers annually. The fare structure of Indian Railways besides considering the socio-economic factors also largely aligns with the relevant best practices adopted by different railway systems of the world.

There is no concession in fare in Vande Bharat trains, however four seats as reserved quota are earmarked for persons with disabilities (Divyangjans) in chair car of each train service.

The fares of Indian Railways are among the lowest in comparison to other countries in the world.

A comparison of the Indian Railway passenger fares (ordinary class) with the fares of the similar segment of services of the neighbouring countries is as under:

Country	Approx lowest fare per PKM	Comparison with India
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India	~ ₹ 0.20	
Pakistan	~ ₹ 0.54	~ 2.5x higher
Bangladesh	~ ₹ 0.37	~ 1.5x higher
Sri Lanka	~ ₹ 0.5	~ 2.5x higher

Passenger fare in Vande Bharat (Semi High-speed train) when compared with the near similar segment of services in Chair Car (AC) for a journey of around 300-400 km is as under:

Country	Average approx fare per PKM	Comparison with India
India	~ ₹ 2.19	
China	~ ₹ 7	~ 3x higher
Japan	~ ₹ 20	~ 9x higher
France	~ ₹ 13	~ 6x higher

Note: Comparison of fares in above tables is based on information as available in public domain.

There is no plan to implement dynamic fares in Vande Bharat Chair Car or Vande Bharat Sleeper trains.

Indian Railways gave subsidy of Rs. 60,466 crore on passenger tickets in 2023-24. This amounts to concession of 45% on an average, to every person, travelling on Railways. In other words, if the cost of providing service is Rs. 100, then the price of ticket is Rs. 55 only. This subsidy is continuing for all passengers. Further, concessions beyond this subsidy amount are continuing for many categories like 4 categories of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjans), 11 categories of patients and 8 categories of students.

Indian Railway fixes the fares with due consideration of the cost of service, value of service, affordability, competition from other competing modes, socio-economic considerations etc. Fares of different train services are determined also by the type of services/facilities offered.

Evaluation of various alternatives for rationalization of passenger fare is a continuous and ongoing process. Feedback regarding various passenger related policies including passenger fare are being received continuously through various forums such as passenger associations, consultative committees at station, division, zonal levels etc.

Indian Railways has undertaken two rationalizations of passenger fares during the financial year 2025–26 after a gap of 5 years. These revisions have been carried out uniformly and in a calibrated manner across applicable classes. The first rationalization was implemented with effect from 01.07.2025, in which there was no increase in fare of Second Class Ordinary up to 500 km and thereafter increase of half paisa per passenger per kilometer (PKM). There was a marginal increase in fares of Ordinary (Sleeper Class and First-Class) by half paisa per PKM, in Mail Express Non-AC Classes by one paisa per PKM and in AC Classes by 02 paisa per PKM.

The second rationalisation was implemented with effect from 26.12.2025, in which there was no increase in fares of Second Class Ordinary up to 215 km and thereafter increase of one paisa per PKM. There was a marginal increase in fares in Ordinary (Sleeper Class and First-Class) by one paisa per PKM and in Mail Express Non-AC Class & AC Classes by two paisa per PKM.

The increase in fares has been low, ranging from half paise per km to two paise per km of travel. Keeping the affordability concerns of low and middle income passengers, there has been no increase in fare in the last ten years for Suburban service and season ticket holders. It is estimated that less than half the trips will have a marginal increase in fare.

This information was provided by the Union Minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting and Electronics & Information Technology, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, in a reply to questions in Lok Sabha today.

Dharmendra Tewari/ Dr. Nayan Solanki/ Manik Sharma

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