



Faster, Safer, Comfortable, And Modern Indian Railways is the Ride of Common Man and Middle Class: Union Rail Minister in Parliament

Government Remains Committed to Serving the Poorest by Continuously Improving the Travel Experience at an Affordable Price

Union Rail Minister Terms Shift of Indian Railways from "Slow Growth" to "Super-Fast Transformation" as a New Era

With about 1,37,000 km Railway Track and more than 25,500 Trains, Indian Railways Helps People and Freight Move from One Part of the Country to Another for Work & Build Economy

With more Non-AC Coaches, Indian Railways Prioritizes Needs of Common Citizens: Ashwini Vaishnaw

Government Offers Heavily Subsidized Rail Travel in India; Absorbs 45% of Every Passenger Ticket Cost, Making Fares Lower Than Neighbouring Nations and Much Lower Than the Developed World for a More Modern Travel Experience

200 New Intercity Trains besides 238 New Suburban Trains for Mumbai with Automatic Door-Closing Systems to Boost Short-Distance Travel

Besides 5 Lakh Jobs in 10 Years and 1.43 Lakh Direct Jobs in the Last 2 Years, Railway Projects Are Generating Millions of Indirect Employment Opportunities

Enhanced Station Amenities and Tech-Driven Maintenance Practices Redefining Travel Experience in India

Indian Railways is witnessing unprecedented expansion and modernisation, supported by a record budgetary allocation of around ₹2.78 lakh crore in the Union Budget 2026–27. Responding to the discussion in Parliament on the **Demands for Grants (2026–27) of the Ministry of Railways**, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw today highlighted that a key structural reform in the Railways was the **merger of the Railway Budget with the General Budget**, which has led to three major benefits. He described the ongoing transformation of Indian Railways as a shift from “slow growth” to “super-fast transformation”, marking the beginning of a new era for the national transporter.

Firstly, it enabled **substantial enhancement in budgetary support**, increasing from about ₹25,000–30,000 crore earlier to around ₹2.78 lakh crore in the current financial year. Secondly, it facilitated **continuous decision-making and approvals throughout the year**, including sanctioning of projects, introduction of new services, and technology adoption. Thirdly, it brought in **greater transparency and institutional monitoring**, with projects being reviewed through systems involving the Ministry of Finance and NITI Aayog.

रेलवे की फाइनेंशियल हेल्थ माननीय प्रधानमंत्री जी के नेतृत्व में इन 10 वर्षों में बहुत सुधरी है:माननीय रेल मंत्री @AshwiniVaishnaw जी pic.twitter.com/eM4DCKhiVz

— Ministry of Railways (@RailMinIndia) March 17, 2026

Record Budget Allocation and Financial Position

The Union Minister stated that the **Union Budget 2026–27 provides a record allocation for Indian Railways**, benefiting all states across the country and supporting accelerated infrastructure development.

रेलवे को जो रिकॉर्ड बजट एलोकेशन हुआ है 2 लाख 78 हजार करोड़ रुपए का, उसका लाभ करीब-करीब हर राज्य को मिलेगा :माननीय रेल मंत्री @AshwiniVaishnaw जी pic.twitter.com/yBFiAqiBaL

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Shri Vaishnaw explained that the **major expenditure components of Railways** include staff costs of about ₹1.19 lakh crore, pension expenditure of around ₹64,000 crore, energy costs of approximately ₹32,000 crore, and finance costs of about ₹23,000 crore. Despite these substantial expenditures, Railways continues to maintain a **modest surplus**.

He further noted that **electrification has resulted in savings of approximately ₹6,000 crore**, with diesel consumption steadily declining due to increased electrification.

Infrastructure Expansion and Capacity Enhancement

Shri Vaishnaw highlighted the significant expansion in railway infrastructure over the past decade. Freight loading has increased from about **1,055 million tonnes in 2013–14 to around 1,650 million tonnes**, making Indian Railways the **second-largest freight carrier globally**.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister @narendramodi, Indian Railways has transformed dramatically over the past 10 years

 Cargo volume was 1,055 million tonnes from 2004 to 2013-14. Last year, it hit 1,617 million tonnes, and it's on track for 1,650 million tonnes by the end... pic.twitter.com/MVgYEnEy4e

— PIB India (@PIB_India) March 17, 2026

Track construction has accelerated substantially, with approximately **35,000 km of new tracks laid**, compared to about 15,000 km in the earlier period. Electrification has also seen rapid progress, increasing from about **5,200 km to nearly 47,000 km**, achieving over **99% network electrification**.

In terms of safety infrastructure, the number of **Road Over Bridges (ROBs) and Road Under Bridges (RUBs)** has increased from around 4,000 to about 14,000. Automatic signalling has expanded from about 1,500 km to over 4,000 km.

The Minister also stated that **LHB coaches**, which are safer and more modern, have increased significantly, with about **48,000 coaches added** in recent years. Locomotive production has also risen to around **12,000 units**, while wagon induction has crossed **2 lakh units**.

Tunnels, Freight Corridors and Strategic Connectivity

Shri Vaishnaw underlined that a major milestone has been achieved in tunnel construction. While about **125 km of tunnels** were constructed till 2014, an additional **486 km of tunnels** have been constructed thereafter, significantly improving connectivity in difficult terrains such as the Northeast and Jammu & Kashmir.

रेलवे के आरंभ से 2014 तक कुल 125 किलोमीटर टनल बनी थी। 2014 के बाद 486 किलोमीटर टनल बनी है :माननीय रेल मंत्री @AshwiniVaishnaw जी pic.twitter.com/dRRwUNxPtq

— Ministry of Railways (@RailMinIndia) March 17, 2026

He further noted that the **Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFCs)** have seen substantial progress, with around **2,800 km completed** and about **480 freight trains operating daily** on these corridors.

Operational Performance and Network Growth

Shri Vaishnaw stated that Indian Railways currently operates about **25,571 trains daily**, ensuring smoother travel during peak seasons such as Holi, Diwali, and Chhath.

रिकॉर्ड संख्या में 25,571 ट्रेनें डेली चल रही हैं। जिसका बहुत अच्छा रिजल्ट मिला है : माननीय रेल मंत्री
@AshwiniVaishnaw जी pic.twitter.com/9H2WqnedDD

— Ministry of Railways (@RailMinIndia) March 17, 2026

The total railway network has expanded to approximately **1,37,522 route kilometres**, with continuous annual growth. Additionally, the Railways now has about **3.86 lakh wagons** and around **98,000 coaches**, both at record levels.

Safety Improvements

The Minister emphasised that safety remains a core priority, with focused interventions in **track maintenance, rolling stock maintenance, technology adoption, and training practices**.

He stated that **railway accidents have reduced by about 90%**, supported by systematic root cause analysis and corrective measures. Investment in safety has also increased significantly, with about **₹1.2 lakh crore being allocated towards safety-related works**.

On safety technology, he highlighted the progress of **Kavach**, the indigenously developed Automatic Train Protection system. Approximately **3,000 km of network has already been covered**, with work underway on about **20,000 km** and installation planned on around **8,000 locomotives**.

He emphasised that Kavach is a **comprehensive safety system**, involving optical fibre networks, telecom towers, data centres, and onboard equipment, comparable in complexity to a full telecom infrastructure.

Passenger Services and Affordable Travel

Shri Vaishnaw stated that Railways continues to prioritise **affordable travel for common citizens**. Around **70% of coaches are general and sleeper class**, ensuring accessibility for the majority of passengers.

He informed that **additional general coaches have been introduced**, including about **1,250 coaches in 2024–25** and around **860 in 2025–26**.

Railways is currently providing a **passenger subsidy of approximately ₹60,000 crore annually**, translating to an average concession of about **45% per passenger**. In suburban sections like Mumbai, an additional subsidy of around **₹3,000 crore** is provided.

देश भर में 60 हजार करोड़ रुपए की सब्सिडी दी जाती है जो कि बहुत बड़ा कन्सेशन है। करीब 45% कन्सेशन हर एक यात्री को मिल रहा है : माननीय रेल मंत्री @AshwiniVaishnaw जी pic.twitter.com/MIxJYFReY

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Introduction of New Train Services

The Union Minister highlighted the introduction and expansion of modern train services. Currently, more than **160 Vande Bharat services** are operational, along with **60 Amrit Bharat train services** catering to affordable long-distance travel.

He also informed that the manufacturing **of 133 Amrit Bharat trains is underway**. In addition, **Vande Bharat Sleeper trains have been introduced**, and their performance has received positive feedback.

133 अमृत भारत ट्रेनों का मैन्युफैक्चरिंग चल रहा है। जो देश के हर गरीब परिवार के लिए बहुत बड़ा वरदान साबित होगा : माननीय रेल मंत्री @AshwiniVaishnaw जी pic.twitter.com/EwVaPlrYYf

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Railways is also undertaking production of **238 new suburban trains for Mumbai with automatic door-closing systems** and around **200 new MEMU (to be branded as Intercity) trains** for short-distance travel.

Special Trains and Passenger Convenience

Shri Vaishnaw stated that special train operations have expanded significantly to meet seasonal demand. While earlier around 2,000–2,500 special trains were operated annually, this time a record number of special trains are operated for the convenience of people.

During major festivals, such as Diwali and Chhath, about **12,383 special trains** were operated, while over **1,500 trains have already been run during Holi**.

He further noted that **holding areas are being developed at 75 major stations**, and over **1,200 new EMU/MEMU services** have been introduced to improve passenger convenience.

Employment and Recruitment Reforms

On employment, Shri Vaishnaw stated that approximately **5 lakh jobs have been provided in Railways over the past decade**, with **1.43 lakh recruitments currently underway**.

He highlighted the introduction of a **structured annual recruitment calendar**, ensuring predictability and transparency. Railway recruitment examinations are being conducted across **150 cities in 15 languages**, with participation of around **3.6 crore candidates**.

He also informed that a **centralised monitoring system (war room)** has been established to address grievances promptly and ensure smooth conduct of examinations.

Technology, Innovation and Make in India in Railways

Continuing his response, **Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw** highlighted the growing role of **technology and Make in India** across all domains of Indian Railways, including operations, maintenance, infrastructure, and passenger services.

He informed that the **RailOne App**, launched in July 2025, has gained significant traction, with over **2.5 crore downloads** and facilitating approximately **9.5 lakh ticket transactions daily**. The app integrates multiple passenger services including reserved and unreserved ticketing, platform tickets, train enquiries, PNR status, and grievance redressal on a single platform.

The Minister further stated that the **Passenger Reservation System (PRS)** has been comprehensively modernised after several decades. The upgraded system is being rolled out in phases and is expected to significantly improve booking efficiency and transparency. Improvements in the **Tatkal booking system** have also been implemented to curb misuse through automated bots and unauthorized software, resulting in better availability for genuine users.

Shri Vaishnaw also noted the deployment of **AI-based systems**, including cameras for wildlife protection and advanced technologies such as **IoT, Artificial Intelligence, and Machine Learning** for predictive maintenance across the network.

Under the Make in India initiative, Indian Railways has emerged as a significant exporter, with railway exports crossing **₹24,000 crore**, reaching countries such as Germany, USA, France, UK, Australia, and others.

Station Redevelopment and Capacity Augmentation

Shri Vaishnaw stated that Indian Railways has undertaken one of the **largest station redevelopment programmes globally**, covering approximately **1,300 stations**. Out of these, about **180 stations have been completed**, while nearly **500 stations are at advanced stages of completion**.

He emphasised that, unlike global practices where stations are often shut down during reconstruction, Indian Railways is executing redevelopment works while maintaining continuous train operations,

ensuring safety and minimal inconvenience to passengers.

In addition, capacity augmentation works have been taken up in **48 high-demand cities**, including construction of additional platforms, stabling lines, pit lines, and coaching terminals, which will significantly enhance operational efficiency in the coming years.

Integrated Planning through PM Gati Shakti

The Union Minister highlighted that railway expansion is now being planned through the **PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan**, which uses geospatial mapping for integrated infrastructure planning.

Through scientific assessment of demand from industries, urban centres, and logistics nodes, new railway projects have been identified systematically. Since 2014, approximately **27,000 km of new railway projects** have been sanctioned, with a total investment of about ₹**4.27 lakh crore**.

Expansion in North Eastern Region

Shri Vaishnaw noted that significant progress has been made in improving rail connectivity in the **North Eastern region**. States such as Mizoram have been connected to the railway network, while connectivity projects in Manipur, Nagaland, and Sikkim are progressing rapidly.

He stated that improved rail connectivity has contributed to **reduced transportation costs, improved logistics, and better accessibility** in the region.

Railways and Cultural Connectivity

The Minister highlighted efforts to strengthen **rail connectivity to major cultural and religious centres** across the country.

Comprehensive infrastructure development plans have been prepared for major events such as Kumbh gatherings in cities like Nashik, Ujjain, Haridwar, Rajahmundry, and Kumbakonam. These include station upgrades, additional bridges, underpasses, track doubling, and signalling improvements to handle large passenger volumes efficiently.

Project Execution and Land Acquisition Challenges

Shri Vaishnaw stated that timely execution of railway projects requires **active cooperation from State Governments**, particularly in land acquisition.

He noted that delays in land acquisition in certain regions have impacted project progress. He emphasised that railway development is a **collaborative effort under the federal structure**, and faster land acquisition would help accelerate project implementation across states.

High-Speed Rail and Bullet Train Progress

Shri Vaishnaw provided an update on the **Mumbai–Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (Bullet Train) Project**, stating that construction is progressing rapidly.

Key milestones include:

- Over **300 km of viaduct construction completed**
- Significant progress in pier construction, track laying, and station development
- Bridges completed across multiple rivers
- Work underway on India's **first undersea rail tunnel**, with progress already achieved

He stated that the project is targeted for **phased commissioning starting 2027**, with trains expected to operate at speeds of up to **350 km/h**, reducing travel time between Mumbai and Ahmedabad to under 2 hours.

The Minister also informed that **seven additional high-speed rail corridors** have been announced, which will expand India's high-speed network to approximately **4,000 km in the future**.

Reforms in Passenger Experience and Cleanliness

Shri Vaishnaw highlighted ongoing reforms aimed at improving **passenger experience**, particularly cleanliness. A new initiative has been launched on a pilot basis in long-distance trains, where **continuous cleaning is ensured from origin to destination** across all classes, including general coaches. This initiative is being implemented in selected trains across zones and is expected to enhance overall passenger satisfaction.

Border Infrastructure and Strategic Connectivity

Concluding his response, **Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw** highlighted the significant emphasis being placed on **rail connectivity in border and strategic areas**.

He stated that multiple projects have been undertaken to strengthen connectivity in border regions, enhancing both **strategic mobility and regional development**. In Jammu & Kashmir, works such as **Baramulla–Uri extension (DPR stage)**, **Qazigund–Budgam doubling**, and surveys for **Jammu–Rajouri–Poonch connectivity** are being progressed.

In the North Eastern region, several projects are advancing, including preparation and completion of DPRs for new lines such as **Lanka–Silchar**, **Dekargaon–Silghat**, and other strategic routes. Surveys and construction activities are also underway for capacity enhancement, including additional lines between **New Jalpaiguri and Kamakhya**.

Shri Vaishnaw further stated that **international connectivity projects**, including links with neighbouring countries such as Bhutan, have also been taken up.

In northern and western border areas, projects such as **Anupgarh–Khajuwala**, **Jaisalmer–Barmer–Bhildi**, and other routes along the India–Pakistan border are being developed to improve accessibility and logistics.

In Himachal Pradesh and adjoining regions, works such as the **Beri–Manali–Leh (DPR stage)** and **Ghanauli –Baddi line** are progressing. Similarly, in Punjab and other northern states, new lines and capacity enhancement projects are underway.

He also highlighted a strategically important project in the **Siliguri corridor**, where plans are being developed for a **30 km underground double-line corridor** to ensure uninterrupted connectivity in critical situations.

Additionally, along the **India–Nepal border**, multiple doubling and capacity enhancement projects are being undertaken, including sections such as **Narkatiaganj–Raxaul–Sitamarhi–Darbhanga–Muzaffarpur**, to strengthen cross-border connectivity and regional development.

Acknowledgement of Railway Workforce and Conclusion

Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw acknowledged the contribution of approximately **12.5 lakh railway employees**, including loco pilots, track maintainers, station staff, and technical personnel, who ensure uninterrupted railway operations across the country, often working during festivals and challenging conditions.

He emphasised that Indian Railways' transformation is the result of **collective efforts of its workforce**, supported by sustained policy focus and investment.

The Demands for Grants sought Parliamentary approval for the Ministry's detailed expenditure proposals from the Consolidated Fund of India, encompassing key priorities such as capacity augmentation, safety enhancement, network decongestion, and passenger amenities, while balancing significant operational

commitments.

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