



With Reforms, Railways Carries 170 Per Cent More Cement in Last Four Months; Eyes Fly Ash Market Now

Environment-Friendly New Container Wagons Simplify Loading & Unloading, while Reducing Material Cost and Turnaround Time

Turnaround Brings Silent Revolution in Construction Industry; Cheaper Cement Cost Helps in Affordable Housing for Poor & Middle Class

More Cement Moving by Railways Reduces Truck Load on Roads, Lowers Congestion and Improves Freight Efficiency

Railway Minister Urges Officials to Realise the Vast Potential in Fly Ash Transportation Market and Help Convert The Waste of Power Plants into National Wealth

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In a major success for railway reforms, Indian Railways has recorded a 170 per cent rise in cement movement in the last four months. The increase comes after Railways introduced a series of reforms in cement transportation last year in November. These reforms are based on innovative bulk cement tank containers for seamless end-to-end logistics. The Union Railway Minister, Ashwini Vaishnaw reviewed container sector reforms and their implementation today.

The cement reforms were introduced to increase rail-based movement of bulk cement and encourage a shift from road transport to cleaner and more efficient rail logistics. Railways introduced customised tank containers and bulk cement terminal policy to support multimodal handling of cement.

The Union Minister said the new system has made loading and unloading easier and is also reducing material loss. Cement manufactured at one place can now move directly to consumption centres in specialised tank containers, reducing multiple handling processes and improving plant-to-market efficiency. Since the containers are of standard shape and compatible with Ready-Mix Concrete (RMC) machines, cement reaches construction sites in ready-to-use form. This has reduced two stages of handling, leading to lower logistics cost and faster turnaround.

The improved turnaround in cement logistics is bringing a silent revolution in the construction industry. By reducing handling stages and logistics costs, the overall delivered cost of cement is expected to come down, which can translate into more affordable construction inputs. This cost efficiency is particularly significant for housing demand, as it supports the goal of making housing more affordable for the poor and middle class by easing pressure on construction costs across the value chain.

The innovative “Make in India” tank containers are designed for seamless movement from train to trailer and back to train, enabling efficient door-to-door logistics solutions. Each container supports mechanised loading and unloading, while also reducing spillage and packaging losses compared to conventional bagged cement transportation.

The Union Minister said the reform is also environment friendly as dust generation during loading and unloading has been significantly reduced. The shift towards bulk movement through containers is lowering fuel consumption, reducing emissions and promoting cleaner logistics while also reducing congestion on roads.

After the success in cement transportation, Railways is now working on a similar reform for fly ash transportation. Reviewing the sector with senior officials, Shri Vaishnav urged officials to tap the vast potential in the fly ash transportation market and convert the waste generated by thermal power plants into national wealth.

The Union Minister noted that nearly 300 million metric tonnes of fly ash is produced in the country, but only about 13 million tonnes is currently transported by Railways. He asked officials to significantly increase Railways’ share and facilitate movement of fly ash to brick kilns, cement industries and construction sites across the country. Calling it a major “waste to wealth” opportunity, he said fly ash, often treated as waste by power plants, is actually a valuable resource for road construction, cement manufacturing and brick production.

Wider transportation and utilisation of fly ash will help reduce pollution, promote recycling of industrial waste and lower the cost of construction materials such as bricks and cement. It can also be used in several construction activities, supporting sustainable infrastructure development.

The reforms in cement transportation, coupled with the rollout of innovative container wagons, mark a significant step towards more efficient, cost-effective and scalable freight logistics in Indian Railways. Building on this momentum, the focus on fly ash is expected to further strengthen the “waste to wealth” approach, while expanding sustainable freight movement across key infrastructure sectors.

Dharmendra Tewari/ Dr. Nayan Solanki/ Ritu Raj/ Manik Sharma

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