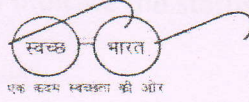


पुरेश प्रभु  
JRESH PRABHU



रेल मंत्री  
भारत सरकार, नई दिल्ली  
MINISTER OF RAILWAYS  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Dear Friend,

Indian Railways is the lifeline of the nation and carries about 23 million passengers daily and carries about 1 billion tonnes of freight annually. You are aware that the Indian Railways operations and logistics is a complex phenomenon handled tirelessly by its employees. I salute the grit and dedication of each employee of Indian Railways, present or retired. As previous employees of this organisation, you have given your blood and sweat in running this organisation and reach the commanding heights where it stands today. It is rightly said that once a Railway man, always a Railway man. Although you have retired, I am sure you would have keenly followed the developments that have taken place in Indian Railways over the last three years.

I, as the Minister for Railways, had announced a slew of initiatives in the last two years. Action has been initiated on all announcements and many of them have already been completed. All efforts are now aimed at consolidating and creating a critical mass for holistic experience. However, it may be appreciated that some changes may be visible in the short term; for others initiatives to fructify a longer gestation period would be required.

2. Some of the goals that we have set for ourselves to be fulfilled by 2020 include the following:

- Reserved accommodation on trains available on demand
- Time tabled freight trains
- High end technology for safety
- Elimination of unmanned level crossings on BG network
- Punctuality @ 95%
- Speed of freight trains @50kmph & Mail/Express trains @ 80 kmph
- Semi-high speed trains along the golden quadrilateral

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- Zero direct discharge of human waste

3. The paras that follow indicate the status of some of the initiatives.

*Infrastructure upgradation*

- In 2016-17, IR **commissioned about 2855 kms of lines** for passenger services, which is the highest ever, and in **2017-18, the target is 3,500 kms.**
- Since 2015, IR has **sanctioned about 12,700 kms of doubling** to overcome the problem of congestion over the high-density network.
- BG lines commissioning expected **to increase to 19 km per day** as against **7 km per day now.**
- About **2,013 kms of electrification has been completed** in 2016-17 and new electrification projects of **4,000 km have been sanctioned** in Budget 2017-18. A perspective plan for electrification of core network of Railways has been drawn up.
- The entire rail network of **North-East states has been converted to BG.** BG connectivity to all the **capitals of the North-Eastern states is targeted for achievement by 2020.**
- Efforts are on to procure modern, **state of the art light weight rolling stock** to enable higher speeds and greater carrying capacity. **Terminals and good-sheds are proposed to be modernized** and used as multi-modal logistic hubs through engagement with the private sector.
- **Two Dedicated Freight Corridors at a cost of Rs. 1 lakh crore** are expected to be commissioned by 2019. Monitoring of DFC s being done with the help of drones. Commissioning of these DFCs will add 3300 kms of new lines to the existing network. Reports for 3 new DFCs are currently under consideration.
- A **high-speed corridor has been sanctioned from Mumbai to Ahmedabad at a cost of Rs. 1 lakh crore** and is expected to be commissioned by 2023. The company for implementing the work has already been set up
- A **paradigm shift** has been brought into the approach to network development, **especially for upgrading existing network to higher speeds.** Detailed studies have been conducted to prepare a plan to adopt a corridor-based approach for



upgrading busiest routes to 200 kmph. As the DFCs, currently under construction, are operationalised, the existing upgraded corridors will be able to provide overnight services from Delhi to the metro cities of Mumbai and Kolkata.

- **Mumbai Urban Transportation Project Phase III project has been sanctioned.**

#### *Capital expenditure*

- **Investment plan of Rs. 8.56 lakh crore drawn up**
- **Funds to the tune of Rs. 1.5 lakh crore tied up from LIC for financing rail projects.** The focus of all investments continues to be decongestion of the network, electrification and investment in safety related assets.
- **In 2015-16, Indian Railways invested over Rs. 93,000 crore in construction, procurement and replacement of assets through their Plan expenditure.**
- **The Indian Railways are expected to close 2016-17 with a capital expenditure of Rs. 1.21 lakh crore.**
- **For 2017-18, the Plan size has been pegged by the Railways at Rs. 1,31,000 crore.**
- **Total expenditure from April 2015 - March 2018 (3 years) about Rs. 3.5 lakh crore of capital expenditure against an average of Rs. 48,000 crore during 2009-2014.**

#### *Safer operations*

- **Expenditure on safety related activities – Rs. 63063 crore in 2016-17 RE.** It was only Rs 39,200 crore in 2013-14 and Rs 46,048 Crores in 2015-16.
- **1987 level crossings were eliminated and 1306 ROBs/RUBs constructed in 2016-17, the highest ever till date**
- **To liquidate the backlog of renewal of assets and to ensure safer running of trains, a *Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh* has been created with a corpus of Rs. 1 lakh crore, to be spent over a period of five years.**
- **IR proposes to use the proceeds of the Safety Fund to leverage technology and carry out infrastructure upgrades apart from re-training and skilling its staff. Working towards the objective of elimination of unmanned level crossings on**



the BG network by 2020, three zonal Railways (West-Central, Eastern and Central) have eliminated them on their network. This will be taken forward to its logical conclusion by utilizing the funds available through the *Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh*.

- Further, it is proposed to provide **automated monitoring systems with online collection and analysis of data which will help in minimizing manual dependence in detection of defects on running trains and help in arresting accidents because of such defects**. Strengthening of rolling stock capability by improvement in couplers, bogies and suspension will help in moving towards safer running of trains. From next FY, the production of non-LHB coaches has been stopped such that passenger travel is safer and existing conventional coaches are being retro-fitted with safer couplers which will prevent coaches climbing on each other in times of accidents.

#### *Passenger experience*

- Introduced India's fastest train **Gatimaan Express @ 160 kmph**
- As was announced in the Budget of 2016-17, new train products **Humsafar** as well as a long distance unreserved service, **Antyodaya** have been introduced and a premium service, **Tejas**, and overnight double-decker service **UDAY** will be introduced soon. New coaches with modern facilities for the unreserved passenger called Deen Dayalu coaches have been pressed into service.
- Indian Railways is also undertaking **refurbishment of existing coaches** for a pleasant and more comfortable passenger experience.
- In line with the theme of '**Sugamay Bharat**' and to make Railway stations modern and passenger friendly, **till date, 316 escalators & 178 lifts** have been commissioned at A-1, A & C category stations and stations of tourist importance over IR and **another 500 stations shall be made differently-abled passenger friendly** by providing lifts and escalators at these stations.
- It is also proposed to progressively provide **access control at stations** to provide a better customer experience and **control ticketless traveling**.
- An app is being developed to provide **integrated services to passengers**.



- IR has initiated a **SMS-based Clean My Coach Service** for cleaning trains on demand. IR intends to introduce a concept of '**Coach Mitra**' which will be a single window interface to register all coach related requirements of passengers travelling in reserved coaches, such as, **cleaning, disinfection, linen, train lighting, air conditioning and watering of coaches.**
- The number of trains covered by **On Board Housekeeping Services** is also being **increased to over 1000.**
- An **independent third party survey of 407 major stations** on cleanliness parameters was carried out in 2016. Railways are taking necessary action to improve the cleanliness standards of their stations. A similar survey of railway stations will be carried out again this year. **A third-party survey on cleanliness of important trains** is also proposed to be done in 2017.
- **Wi-Fi provided at more than 100 stations**
- Gave **voice to customers by leveraging social media, real time redressal of grievances**
- 8221 Million Passenger Travelled as against 8151 Million passengers in 2015-16
- Passengers booked about 70 million more than last year. (+0.89 %)
- Passenger Earnings estimated at Rs. 2,000 crore more than last year
- The total earnings are estimated to be around Rs.47, 400 crore. This is the highest ever passenger earnings.
- 1st time in recent year negative growth has been seized and increase in the number of passenger and Earning started
- Speeding up of trains: 350 trains speeded up.104 trains converted to superfast express trains.

*Preferred freight carrier*

- In the pursuit to win back the lost modal share, Indian Railways proposes to implement end to end **integrated transport solution for selected commodities** through partnerships with logistic players.



- **Successful trials conducted for 25-ton axle load light wagons**
- It is also intended to **conduct trials for dwarf containers to capture the domestic cargo** market. New types of commodity- specific containers are being developed with a view to capturing new commodity traffic.
- **Freight rationalization carried out** – port congestion and busy season surcharge dropped, dual pricing policy for iron ore withdrawn
- **Key customer managers appointed**
- Long term service level agreements being signed with key customers
- **Pilot conducted for time tabled freight trains**
- **47 sidings to be commissioned by March 2017**
- Overall loading is about 1107.1 MT. This is the highest ever annual freight loading by IR (previous best of 1104.2 MT in 2015-16)
- Iron ore loading is the highest ever at 137.2 MT (previous best was 136.9 MT in 2007-08)
- Steel loading is the highest ever at 48.3 MT (previous best was 42.5 MT in 2015-16)
- Raw Material for steel Plants loading is highest ever at 21 MT (previous best was 20.3 in 2015-16)
- 'Other Goods' loading is the highest ever-79.9 MT ( previous best was 78.05 MT in 2015-16)
- Highest ever coal loading from CIL: Yearly loading from Coal India Limited sources is expected to be around 223 rakes per day which is the highest ever against 212.8 rakes per day last year.
- Monthly Loading from CIL sources in the month of March 17 was also the highest ever - 253.6 rakes per day against 233.9 rakes per day last year.
- Container loading in March 17 is the highest ever monthly loading 4.47 MT (previous best was 4.29 MT in Jan 15)



*Non-fare revenues and Station Redevelopment*

- **Contracts for redevelopment of Habibganj and Gandhinagar stations** have been awarded while the bidding process for Anand Vihar, Bijawasan and Surat stations is underway.
- **Invitation documents for 23 stations** of the first phase have also been issued and 25 stations in all are likely to be awarded before the close of this financial year.
- The **redevelopment of Varanasi station** has been entrusted to RITES and work will commence on it shortly. Bhubaneswar station is also being developed as part of SMART city development project.
- **Measures for non-fare revenues:**
  - Vinyl wrapping of trains
  - 2,00,000 Rail display network screens across 2000 stations for advertising and information dissemination
  - Sole advertising rights
  - Rail radio
  - Commercial leasing of railway land

*Modernisation by digitisation and cutting edge technology*

- More than **1,250 POS machines at around 750 PRS locations and 800 POS machines at around 340 major suburban UTS counters** have been installed since 10th December. With this, cashless transactions in reservations have gone up from 58 per cent to 68 per cent.
- **98 per cent of freight receipts are through cashless mode** while efforts are on to make it 100 per cent. 99.9 per cent of payments made by Railways are cashless.
- A group has been set up for providing a common, enterprise wide Information & Communication Technology fabric which shall integrate all existing ICT systems and create a **Digitally Enabled, Data Driven Indian Railways**.



*Reforms*

- A comprehensive action plan has been prepared by the Ministry of Railways to carry forward the strategic shifts of the organisation which include ***infrastructure upgradation, passenger experience, preferred freight carrier, non-fare revenue enhancement, zero fatality, modernisation by digitisation and cutting edge technology, organisational culture, cost focus and sustainability***. To take these interventions forward, a transformation office comprising a multidisciplinary team has been set up.
- **Accounting Reform:** To provide financial reports compatible with generally accepted accounting principles and provide activity-based costing to aid managerial decision-making, a Mission "*Beyond Book-keeping*" for accounting reforms had been launched. It is progressing satisfactorily and the accrual based financial statements are targeted for a rollout by March 2019.
- **Regulation:** Setting up of a Rail Development Authority has been approved for recommending tariffs and service level benchmarks. The regulatory authority is expected to restore the balance between passenger and freight tariffs and provide a level playing field to other stakeholders. Key performance indicators will be a focus area to improve asset utilization on IR. This is likely to be in place by August 2017.
- **Joint Ventures with State Governments:** To enhance the commissioning across the country, JVs have been set up by IR with State Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Kerala, Maharashtra and Odisha and about 48 projects identified for development through this route of co-operative federalism. This measure will substantially enhance the daily commissioning of railway lines.
- **Railways of India Development Fund (RIDF):** Indian Railways, in association with the World Bank, have undertaken a scoping study for setting up the Railways of India Development Fund, RIDF, for financing projects in the entire rail sector by pooling funds from pension, insurance and wealth funds. It is expected that in the near future, the facility will be set up which will facilitate investments in the rail sector.



- In pursuance of the objective of optimizing costs, Indian Railways has launched *Mission 41K* for making efforts towards saving Rs. 41,000 crore over the next 10 years through **Integrated Rail Energy Management System**.
- **Key result areas identified** for senior management
- **Largest ever online recruitment** conducted
- **Delegation of powers** to functional levels
- **100% e-procurement** established
- **New R&D organization** being set up
- **New Rail University** coming up at Vadodara

#### *Sustainability*

- Pilot plants for environment friendly **disposal of Municipal Solid Waste** including conversion of bio-degradable waste to energy are being set up at New Delhi and Jaipur Railway stations.
- Process for setting up **five more such solid waste management plants** has been taken up.
- Two production units and one workshop have been taken up for assessment and certification as **Green Industrial Units**. This is proposed to be extended to all production units and major workshops.
- Indian Railways aspires to **feed about 7000 stations with solar power in the next few years**. As a part of this, about 300 stations have already been provided with solar plants including 500 KW plants at Jaipur, Secunderabad, Varanasi, Katra and Kolkata Metro. Further, it has been planned that for 2000 stations, the works shall be taken up this year as part of Railways' 1000 Mega Watt (MW) solar mission.
- In addition, IR will also be enhancing the **wind plants' capacity** to a total of about **200 MW in next few years**.
- By **2019**, all coaches of IR will be fitted with bio-toilets. In 2016-17, 30,000 bio-toilets have been fitted.



4. Indian Railways will always remain grateful for your contribution. I am aware about some of the hardships that our retired employees face in their daily existence. Recently, we have taken a few measures to mitigate your difficulties.


- Introduction of electronic Pension Payment Order (e-PPO). At present, 9 banks have created a capability in generating e-PPOs. This ensures timely generation of PPOs and commencement of pension in the month following retirement as against 2-3 months earlier.
- Due to maintenance of pensioners' database in electronic form, revisions, etc can be worked out easily with retrospective effect
- A dedicated pensioners' portal called ARPAN has been operationalised which will hold legacy pensioners data and also act as a platform for grievance redressal related to pension. For other grievances of pensioners, another portal titled NIVARAN has also been activated where complaints can be registered and tracked.
- Access to timely medical attention is also an area of concern for our retired employees. We have taken a number of measures to improve the medical services. The vacancies of doctors have been reduced from 37% to 30%. The remaining posts are being filled by Contractual Medical Practitioners.
- The powers of General Managers have been enhanced for sanctioning medical reimbursement cases. Now, cases upto Rs. 10 lakh can be settled at the zonal levels.
- We have also allowed disbursement of medicines upto 6 months at one go in case of employees travelling abroad.
- The General Managers have also been delegated powers for empanelment of all CGHS, ESI, etc. hospitals for availing of treatment by retired Railway employees.
- We have also introduced a cashless treatment scheme in case of medical emergency. Presently, the scheme is limited only to the four metros but would be extended to other locations.

5. I have also directed the Member (Staff) to be available to meet the retired employees and sort out any personal issues that they may have.



6. Indian Railways is striving to imbibe best practices and taking all efforts in terms of investments and policy changes to ensure a Railway system that every Indian can be proud of. We are aware that the journey is difficult and we have a long haul ahead but we are determined that with your support and encouragement we will transform Indian Railways and make it the growth engine of the economy. In case you have any suggestions or comments for the improvement or betterment of Indian Railways, please email them to [mysuggestionsforrailways@gmail.com](mailto:mysuggestionsforrailways@gmail.com).

7. My wishes to you and your family for a very healthy and happy life.



(Suresh Prabhu)