

HIGHLIGHTS OF RAILWAY BUDGET, 2004-05

Introduction

- Priority to development and expansion of railway infrastructure as mentioned in the Common Minimum Programme.
- Modernization of Railways, replacement and renewal of assets particularly track renewal, safety of passengers, cleanliness, improvement in passenger amenities, control over expenditure and prevention of leakage of revenue to be the thrust areas.

Review of Performance in 2003-04

- Loading target exceeded by 7.39 MT. This is 38.65 MT higher than the previous year's loading.
- Passenger traffic registered a growth of about 3%.
- The Operating Ratio as per approximate actuals stands at 92.1 % as against 94.1% budgeted.
- Plan expenditure is expected to be around Rs. 13, 311 cr.

Safety

- Consequential train accidents came down to 325 in 2003-04 from 473 in 2000-01.
- Over 1280 unmanned level crossings are planned to be manned over a period of time.

Progress under Special Railway Safety Fund

- Track Renewal - 8,938 km of track renewed up to 31-3-04 out of the total target of 16,538 km.
- Replacement of overaged signaling systems with modern systems completed at 441 stations and work in progress at 1053 other stations.
- Interlocking at level crossings with signals completed at 7095 out of 16,549 manned level crossings.
- Provision of Train Actuated Warning Device (TAWD) undertaken at 90 selected level crossings.
- Track circuiting works in progress at about 5300 locations.
- Rehabilitation/Rebuilding of 1306 bridges completed, 411 more to be done in 2004-05.

New Measures for Safety

- Introduction of Block Proving by Axle Counters, Train Protection and Warning System and provision of Anti-Collision Device (ACD).

- Safety on long welded rails through measurement of actual forces.
- Prohibition on transportation of explosives and inflammable materials in trains to be enforced.
- Setting up of Institute of Rescue and Medical Relief at Bangalore with training modules on Disaster Management.

Security

- Additional responsibilities to RPF for escorting passenger trains, etc. w.e.f. 1st July 2004.
- Skills of existing RPF personnel upgraded.
- Direct recruitment to RPF reverted from RRBs to Security Department.

Several Modernisation steps including

- Bridge improvement and rehabilitation.
- Trials of corrosion resistant wagons.
- Introduction of crew friendly cabs.
- Setting up of International Railway Strategic Management Institute.
- Introduction of computer based Traffic Control System.

IT Measures

- Extension of Material Management Information System (MMIS).
- Pilot project on E-procurement.
- Claim Offices being computerized.
- Unreserved Ticketing System being extended.
- Extension of Passenger Reservation System.
- 300 Goods sheds and sidings to be covered under Rake Management System of Freight Operations Information System (FOIS).
- Coaching Operations Information System (COIS) covering passenger coaches and parcel vans will be implemented.

Catering

- Transparency in award of catering contracts will be ensured.

- Catering services at stations and on trains will be improved. Wholesome milk and milk products sourced from dairy units of cooperative sector, where possible, will be made available at all catering outlets.

Cleanliness

- A nationwide cleanliness drive has been launched - spirit of competition infused.
- Disposable "kulhars" will be made available, use of plastic cups to be discouraged.
- Development of an environment friendly coach toilet discharge system taken up.
- Upholstery/linen used on Railways will henceforth be of handloom/khadi variety.

Book stalls

- As per new bookstall policy, allotment at 'B', 'C' & 'D' class stations open only to unemployed graduates and their associations; 25% reservation to under privileged section.
- At 'A' class stations, a two packet tender system introduced.

Better availability of wagons to customers

- Wagon production to be started at Jamalpur workshop, with marginal augmentation.
- Round the clock loading and unloading of rakes at terminals to be encouraged.
- Multi-modal traffic like Roll on Roll off (RoRo) will be considered.
- Movement of milk by tankers to be facilitated.

Concessions

- 75% concession in fares in second and sleeper classes to widows of Defence personnel killed in action against terrorists/extremists.
- Escort accompanying a deaf and dumb person also to get 50% concession in fares in First, Second, Sleeper Classes and in season tickets.
- 75 % concession in fares in II/SL/II/AC Chair Car and AC 3-tier classes for severe/ moderate haemophilia patients travelling for treatment.
- Full concession in second class to unemployed youths attending interviews for selection to Central Government jobs to be implemented.

Projects

- 1222 kms of BG lines added to the system during 2003-04, 1650 Km targeted for 2004-05.

- Jammu - Udhampur project has been completed and Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla project proceeding as per target.
- Projects in North Eastern States and Southern States also to be expedited.
- Target of completion of 1000 kms of gauge conversion in 2004-05.
- 206 kms of doubling has been completed during 2003-04, target for 2004-05 is 381 km
- 72 Surveys for New Lines, Gauge Conversion, Doubling including updating of old surveys proposed.
- Electrification of 504 route kms has been completed during 2003-04, target for 2004-05 is 375 route-kms.
- 62 throughput enhancement works identified for expeditious completion.

New Production Unit for Wheel Manufacture

- A detailed project report to be commissioned for setting up a new Wheel Manufacturing Unit at Chhapra.
- In-house utilization of metallic scrap by recycling.

Welfare measures

- Encouragement to Railway women employees' welfare and empowerment activities.
- Rs. 5 cr provided for improving the shelters for licensed porters.
- Facility of one set of privilege pass for the licensed porter (coolie) for self only from the station of working to any station on Indian Railways and back extended to the spouse of the porter also.
- Licensed porters/vendors/hawkers/construction workers associated with the Railways to be brought under social security net.
- Grant to be made to Unorganized Workers' Social Security Fund for the benefit of licensed porters.

Reservation

- A special drive to be launched to clear backlog of reserved vacancies in ST & OBC.

Passenger Amenities

- An outlay of Rs. 215 cr has been provided for 2004-05 for Passenger Amenity works.
- Deployment of Lady Ticket Checking Squads.
- 'Village-on-Wheels' trains comprising ordinary sleeper class coaches to be introduced for common man.

Passenger Services

- 15 additional Express trains to be introduced apart from the 17 Sampark Kranti Express trains announced in the Interim Budget; 10 Services to be extended; frequency of 12 popular trains to be increased.

Annual Plan 2004-05

- Total Plan outlay is Rs. 14,498 cr including Rs. 2,933 cr through Special Railway Safety Fund and Rs. 300 cr. separate allotment from General Exchequer for Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla National Project.
- Funds received from General Exchequer are Rs. 7,020 cr. including 2,075 cr as contribution to Special Railway Safety Fund and Rs. 401 cr from the Central Road Fund.
- Internal generation to provide Rs. 2,870 cr apart from Rs. 858 cr contribution to SRSF.
- Market borrowing through IRFC is budgeted at Rs. 3,400 cr and Rs. 50 cr. as investment through a 'BOT' project in the Viramgam-Mehsana Gauge Conversion work.

Budget Estimates 2004-05

- Loading target fixed at 580 million tonnes, 10 million tonnes higher than the interim budget target.
- Freight earnings placed at Rs. 28,745 cr, Rs. 645 cr more than interim budget.
- Passenger earnings revised downward from Rs. 14,200 cr in the Interim Budget to Rs. 13,940 cr based on trend.
- Other Coaching earnings increased from Rs. 990 cr. in the Interim Budget to Rs. 1,040 cr taking into account the proposed re-classification of parcel rates.
- The target for Sundry Other earnings placed at Rs. 1,072 cr.
- The Gross Traffic Receipt are Rs. 44,902 cr which is Rs. 420 cr higher than the interim budget.
- Ordinary Working Expenses budgeted at Rs. 32,960 in the Interim Budget have been recast and kept at Rs. 32,860 cr.
- The post interim budget factors like merger of 50% DA with basic pay and increase in the diesel price will be absorbed by stringent measures for expenditure control and zero base budgeting.
- Appropriation to Depreciation Reserve Fund is stepped up from Rs. 1,900 cr in the Interim Budget to Rs. 2,267 cr.
- Appropriation to Pension Fund from revenue kept at Rs. 6,290 cr.

- The total working expenses budgeted at Rs. 41,417 cr and the net traffic receipt Rs. 4,478 cr as against Rs. 4,225 cr of interim budget.
- Current dividend of Rs. 3,305 cr and Rs. 300 cr towards the deferred dividend liability will be paid.

Freight Rates

- No increase in freight rates.

Introduction of

- Electronic Payment Gateway for speedy and secure transfer of funds from freight customers.
- 'Engine-on-Load' system.
- Rebate of 10% for movement of heavy machinery.

Passenger fares

- No increase in passenger fares.

Parcel rates

- Around 7.1% increase in Parcel rates under Scale-R, rates under Scale-P to be fixed at around 53% of the rates under Scale-R as against 43% at present.
- Scale-E to be merged with Scale -S.
- Scales of charging parcels to be reduced from 4 to 3.
- The ratio between highest and the lowest rates will be reduced from 6.2 to 3.0.
- All types of special Parcel trains including Millennium Parcel trains, to be charged at Scale -P instead of Scale-S.
- The adjustment in parcel rates to generate additional revenue of Rs. 50 cr.