

## Rail Budget 2012-13: Highlights

*The following are the highlights of the railway budget for 2012-13 presented in parliament Wednesday by Railway Minister Dinesh Trivedi:*

- \* No steep increase in passenger fares; 2 paise per km for suburban trains; 3 paise per km for mail and express trains.
- \* Independent tariff authority suggested; needs serious debate; experts panel established; decision after debate in parliament.
- \* GRP/RPF personnel deployed on 3,500 trains.
- \* Free travel by Rajdhani express for Arjuna awardees.
- \* Targeting freight carriage of 1,025 million tonnes to bring in Rs.89,339 crore; passenger earnings estimated at Rs.36,073 crore; gross receipts estimated at Rs.1.32 lakh crore.
- \* Excess of Rs.1,492 crore after meeting expenses/dividend payments not adequate for meeting costs of several projects.
- \* Dedicated railway design wing at National Institute of Design with a contribution of Rs.10 crore.
- \* New passenger services: 820 new items; 75 new express trains; 21 new passenger trains; 75 new services in Mumbai suburban system.
- \* Guru Parikrama trains to be run to Amritsar, Patna and Nanded.
- \* Improvement of passenger amenities at a cost of Rs.1,112 crore; regional cuisines to be introduced.
- \* World Bank funding of Rs.6,500 crore firmed up for dedicated freight corridors; land acquired for 3,300 km; first contracts to be handed out during 2012-13.
- \* Standard of hygiene needs to be improved substantially; all out efforts will be made on this in the next six months; duty bound to provide high standard of services; special housekeeping body to be set up for stations and trains.
- \* Corrosion from night soil being discharged from toilets on tracks costs Rs.350 crore annually; green toilets to be installed in 2,500 coaches in the next one year.
- \* Two thousand one hundred specially designed coaches manufactured to meet needs of the differently abled; aim to provide one such coach in each express train.
- \* Electrification to be undertaken over 6,500 km at an allocation of Rs.8,000 crore during 12th Plan.
- \* Conversion from DC to AC power supply completed in Western Railway corridor of Mumbai suburban rail system; conversion of Central Railway corridor to be completed in 2012-13.
- \* Elevated corridor from Churchgate to Virar in Mumbai being firmed up.
- \* Government should consider dividend payback to railways.
- \* Thirty-one projects over 5,000 km being implemented with state governments sharing costs.
- \* Capacity augmentation to get Rs.4,410 crore during 2012-13.

- \* Eighty-five new line projects to be taken up during 2012-13.
- \* One hundred and fourteen new line surveys to be undertaken during 2012-13.
- \* New line projects to get Rs.6,870 crore in 2012-13.
- \* Gauge conversion to be undertaken over 800 km with an allocation of Rs.1,950 crore.
- \* Focus during next five years on five areas: tracks, bridges, signalling, rolling stock and stations.
- \* Signalling to be improved over 19,000 km.
- \* Investment of Rs.1.70 lakh crore on rolling stock in next five years.
- \* Attempt to increase train speeds to 160 kmph; journey time from New Delhi to Kolkata can be brought down to 14 hours from 17 hours.
- \* Improvements to railway stations can provide employment to 50,000 people.
- \* Outlay of Rs.60,100 crore during 2012-13, the highest ever.
- \* Railways will require Rs.14 lakh crore in the next 10 years for modernisation.
- \* Aim to bring down operating ratio from 90 percent to 84.9 percent in 2012-13 and to 72 percent by 2016-17.
- \* Time has come for formulating national policy for railways on the lines of that for defence and external affairs.
- \* Railways should grow at 10 percent annually for sustained GDP growth.
- \* Railways to invest Rs.7.35 lakh crore during 12th Five Year Plan period (2012-17), a quantum jump from the Rs.1.92 lakh crore invested in previous plan period.
- \* Railways must attract 10 percent of the Rs.20 lakh crore government expects to spend on infrastructure during 12th Plan.
- \* Railways expect gross budgetary support of Rs.2.5 lakh crore during 12th Plan.
- \* Collective challenge to formulate viable funding mechanism for modernisation.
- \* Railways should contribute 2 percent of GDP from the present 1 percent.
- \* Stress on strengthening safety. Has to be benchmarked with the best in the world.
- \* Target of reducing accidents from 0.55 to 0.17 has been met.
- \* Special purpose vehicle to be set up on safety protocols.
- \* Independent railway safety authority to be set up as statutory safety body.
- \* Investment of Rs.5.60 lakh crore required for modernisation.

*(Economic Times)*