

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3956**  
**ANSWERED ON 04.04.2025**

**FREIGHT COMPETITIVENESS AND CONTAINER TRAFFIC**

3956. SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps being taken to improve pricing structure or first and last-mile connectivity for freight transport and reduce dependence on road transport;
- (b) whether the Ministry plans to address the high cost of access to container terminals and repositioning of empty containers;
- (c) the factors preventing Indian Railways from increasing its share of container traffic despite steady growth in domestic and EXIM container volumes; and
- (d) the measures being taken to address the rising cross-subsidisation of passenger services by freight revenue?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF RAILWAYS, INFORMATION & BROADCASTING AND  
ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)

(a) to (d) The details of freight carried by Indian Railways (IR) since 2020-21 are as below:

Financial Year	Freight loading (in MT)	Freight Revenue (₹ in Crore)
2020-21	1233	1,17,232
2021-22	1418	1,41,096
2022-23	1512	1,62,263
2023-24	1591	1,68,293
2024-25 (Provisional)	1617	1,75,302

During 2024-25 IR has transported 1617 MT (provisional) of freight traffic (31% more than 2020-21 freight loading), becoming second largest freight carrying Railways in the world.

Container traffic, in particular has witnessed exponential growth from 48.38 million tonnes in 2014-15 to 83.74 million tonnes in 2023-24 i.e. a growth by 76%.

<i>(In million Tonnes)</i>			
Period	Container Loading (Domestic)	Container Loading (EXIM)	Total
2014-15	10.50	37.88	48.38
2023-24	20.98	63.78	84.76
% growth	99.8%	68%	76%

Indian Railways as a strategic initiative to containerize cargo incorporated CONCOR as a PSU in 1989, to provide responsive, cost effective and reliable logistics solutions. Further, to promote transportation of containerised cargo, Government has adopted multi-prolonged strategy which inter-alia includes:

- i. At present 526 commodities are being charged at Freight All Kinds (FAK) and 48 commodities at Container Class Rate (CCR) which are less than the General Tariff Rate upto 40% and 15% respectively.
- ii. To enable containerized carriage of diverse commodities and enhance the carrying capacity of container trains, operation of specialised containers such as Tank Container, Cube Container, Dwarf Container, Double Stack containers in Higher capacity routes have been permitted.
- iii. Further, for enhancing access to Railway network, terminals have been set up under Gati Shakti Multi Modal Cargo Terminal (GCTO) policy and Exclusive Container Rail Terminal (ECRT) policy. Till 28.02.2025, total 97 GCTs have already been commissioned with an estimated potential of handling traffic of 150 million tonne per annum.
- iv. As an incentive for handling container traffic at Container Rail Terminal (Group-III) owned by IR the rate of Terminal Access Charge (TAC) has been reduced by 50%. In

addition the rate of TAC for rake handled in double operation (loaded in & loaded out) has been reduced by 33%.

- v. Presently CONCOR is offering 25% discount on haulage charges to Shipping lines for repositioning of empty containers from various Gateway Ports/Portside Container Freight Stations (CFSs) to various hinterland terminals to facilitate exports.
- vi. Further, Ministry of Railways (MOR) has adopted policy for participation of private sector to operate container trains over Indian railways as Container Train Operators (CTOs), presently 21 CTO's have obtained licence to run container trains on IR.

Freight transportation by rail being more environment friendly and economical than other modes of transport, all out efforts are continuously being made to increase freight and passenger transportation by rail. IR has taken up several measures, such as:

- i. Network expansion to augment the network capacity by construction of new lines, multi tracking of existing lines and gauge conversion of existing lines. The details of new tracks laid during the last 10 years are as under:

Period	New Tracks Commissioned	Average Commissioning of new tracks
2009-14	7,599 Km	4.2 Km/day
2014-24	31,180 Km	8.54 Km/day ( more than 2 times)

- ii. Removing bottlenecks in operations by yard remodelling, construction of bypass/chord lines, rail flyovers etc.
- iii. Indian Railways has taken up electrification of Railway lines in a mission mode. So far, about 98% of the Indian Railways Broad Gauge (BG) network has been electrified, and balance sections have been taken up. Significant progress has been made in Railway electrification in recent years. A comparison of electrification before and after 2014 is as follows:

<b>Period</b>	<b>Route Kilometre</b>
Before 2014	21,801
2014-25(up to Feb 25)	45,922

- iv. Procurement of Wagons and Locomotives: To increase freight carrying capacity, large numbers of wagons have been procured and locomotives have been manufactured. During 2014 to 2025 (up to February 2025), about 2 lakh wagons have been procured more than 10,000 locomotives have been added for increasing freight loading and mobility.

Indian Railways strive to provide affordable services to all strata of the society. During the year 2023-24, the cost of passenger services was 138.71 paisa per Passenger Km while the earning from passenger services was only 72.72 paisa per Passenger Km. This amounted to a subsidy of ₹60,466 cr (provisional) on passenger tickets in 2023-24.

With a view to offer better services and to enhance passenger earnings, various initiatives have which includes augmentation of on-board capacity, introduction of new trains like Vande Bharat, Amrit Bharat, Namo Bharat rapid rail etc. with better amenities and facilities. Evaluation and rationalization of passenger fares is a continuous and ongoing process. The fares of various trains/ classes is based on the services/facilities provided in these trains.

On account of Social Service Obligations, IR operates trains on uneconomic branch lines, strategic lines, transportation of essential commodities etc.

\*\*\*\*\*