GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3332
ANSWERED ON 20.03.2026

WAGON TURNAROUND TIME AND EMPTY RUNNING OF FREIGHT WAGONS

3332 SHRI S NIRANJAN REDDY:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Wagon Turnaround Time (WTR) has remained around five days between 2018-19 and 2023-24 without significant improvement;

(b) whether in 2023-24, freight wagons ran empty for about 37 per cent of the total distance travelled and whether the percentage of empty running has increased annually during the said period;

(c) whether Government has assessed the impact of increase in empty running on transport capacity utilisation and revenue loss; and

(d) the corrective measures being taken to reduce empty runs and improve wagon productivity?

ANSWER

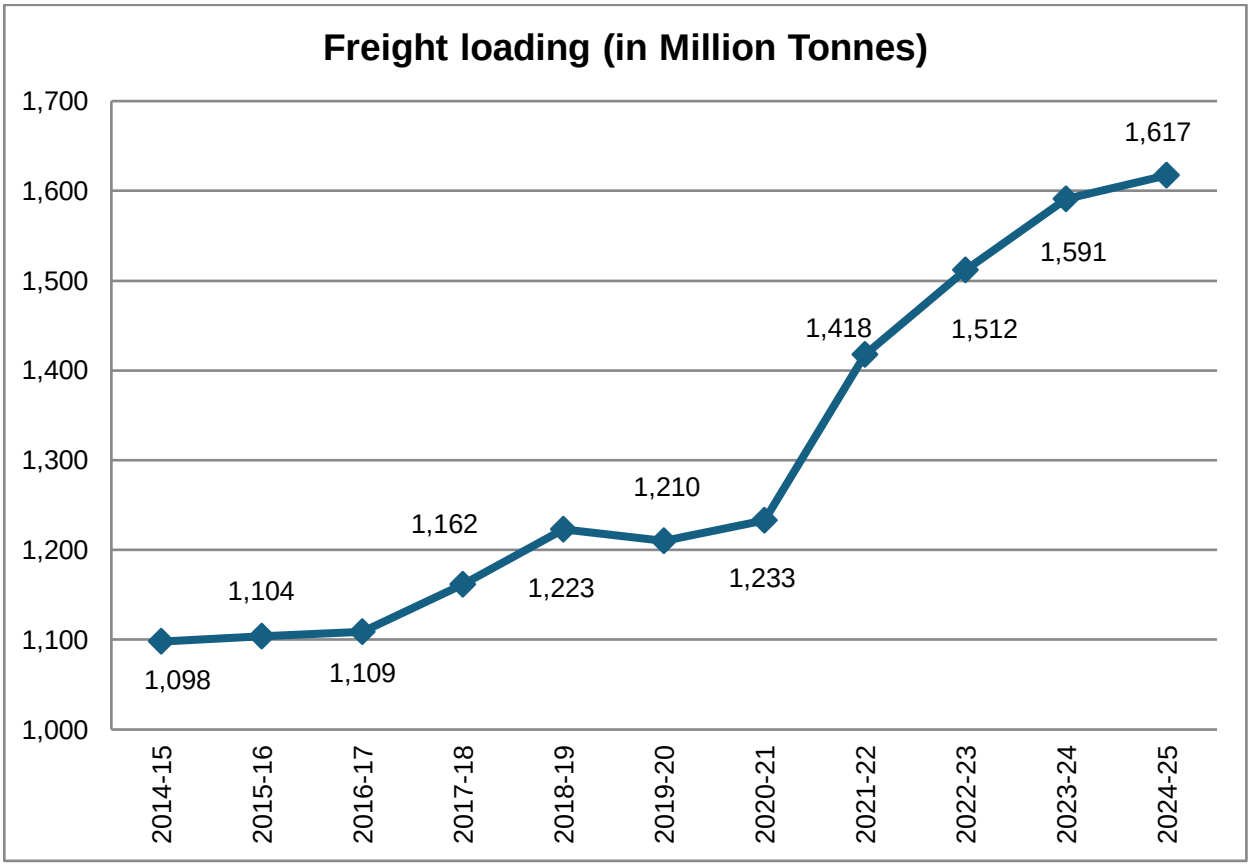
MINISTER OF RAILWAYS, INFORMATION & BROADCASTING AND ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)

(a) to (d): Indian Railway has taken several measures during the last few years to enhance the freight loading and revenue. Freight loading since 2014 is as below:

Year	Freight loading (in Million Tonnes)
2014-15	1,098
2015-16	1,104
2016-17	1,109
2017-18	1,162
2018-19	1,223
2019-20	1,210
2020-21	1,233
2021-22	1,418
2022-23	1,512

2023-24	1,591
2024-25	1,617



Because of these measures, the freight loading has increased from 1,233 MT in 2020-21 to 1,617 MT in 2024-25. During 2024-25, IR transported 1,617 MT thus becoming second largest freight carrying Railways in the world. The measures taken include following:

- To increase the network capacity and improve wagon turn around, rail network expansion has been taken up in a big way by construction of new lines, multi tracking of existing lines, and gauge conversion of existing lines. The details of new tracks laid during the 10 years are as under:

Period	New track commissioned
2009 - 14	7,599 Km
2014-25	34, 428 Km

Further as on 01.04.25, there are 431 (154 New Line, 33 Gauge Conversion and 244 Doubling) projects sanctioned. The summary of which is as under:-

Category	No. of Projects	Total Length (Km)	Length completed till Mar'25 (Km)	Balance length (Km)	Cost (Cr.)
New lines	154	16,142	3,036	13,105	3,77,389
Gauge conversion	33	4,180	2,997	1,183	43,820
Doubling / Multi tracking	244	15,644	6,736	8,909	2,53,711
Total	431	35,966	12,769	23,197	6,74,920

- Procurement of Wagons and Locomotives: To increase freight carrying capacity, large numbers of IR wagons have been procured and locomotives have been manufactured. During 2014 to 2025, about 2 lakh wagons have been procured and more than 10,000 locomotives have been added for increasing freight loading and mobility.
- Removing bottlenecks in operations by yard remodeling, construction of bypass/chord lines, rail flyovers etc.
- The construction of Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC) from Ludhiana to Sonnagar (1337 Km) and Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (WDFC) from Jawaharlal Nehru Port Terminal (JNPT) to Dadri (1506 Km) has been taken up. Out of total 2843 kms, 2741 route kms (96.4%) has been commissioned and operational.
- Indian Railways has taken up electrification of Railway lines in a mission mode. So far, about 99.4% of Broad Gauge (BG) network has been electrified. A comparison of electrification before and after 2014 is as follows:

Period	Route Kilometre
Before 2014	21,801
2014-26 (upto Feb 26)	47,966

- Industry participation in investment in General Purpose Wagons, Special Purpose/High- Capacity wagons and Automobile carrier wagons for cement, oil, steel, fly-ash, automobile etc. By the FY 2024-25, around 240 rakes of special purpose wagons, 374 rakes of general-purpose, wagons and 48 rakes of automobile wagons have been inducted.
- Under the 'Gati Shakti Multi-Modal Cargo Terminal (GCT)' policy so far, 128 new GCTs have been commissioned, with an estimated traffic capacity of 198 million tonnes per annum (MTPA). In addition, for improvement of freight and parcel terminals from the financial year 2023-24 onwards, an amount of ₹14,500 crore has been allocated.
- A "Bulk Cement Terminal Policy" for setting up terminals on Railway land has been launched recently as part of Railway reforms for facilitating Bulk Cement transportation.
- Ensuring increased availability of rakes/wagons against demand.
- Increasing the loadability for carrying additional traffic per wagon. Length of freight trains has also been increased to increase throughput per train.

- Use of Information Technology in freight operations to improve monitoring and utilization of assets.
- Induction of higher horsepower locomotives.
- Improvement in maintenance practices of wagons and locomotives resulting in increased availability of loco and rolling stock for traffic use.
- Improvement in track and signaling standards to carry higher volume of traffic.
- Training of staff and officers to adopt the new technology and management practices.

Further, Indian Railway has taken various steps to promote the improvement of freight segment through freight rationalization, adoption of various freight incentive schemes for transportation of bulk and small cargo & various concession and services. Some of them are as under:

- Introduction of Gross Tonne Kilometer based haulage rate for Bulk Cement in Tank Containers,
- Cargo Aggregator Transportation Product to promote Fast- Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), White Goods, Electronics, Automotive Components, etc.,
- Liberalised Automatic Freight Rebate Scheme in Traditional Empty Flow Directions,
- Concession on Short lead traffic,
- Discount in freight to Fly Ash /Bed Ash traffic booked in Open/flat Stock & covered wagons,
- Rationalisation of Haulage rate of Automobile traffic,
- Promotion of Bamboo Traffic in North Eastern Region by granting exemption from levy of Busy Season Charge (BSC).
- To enhance the capacity of the automobile stock, various new wagons have been introduced such as ACT 1, ACT 2, ACT 3, NMGHS, etc.
- Discount on empty haulage of containers transporting Chemical Gypsum and Tiles traffic,
- Classification of new commodities such as Potassium Sulphate, Ammonium Bicarbonate Food Grade, RUF Pitch, Liquefied Isobutylene, Liquefied Ethane, etc.

The freight train movement is continuously monitored through the Freight Operations Information System (FOIS). To reduce empty runs and enhance wagon productivity, following measures have been taken:

- **Traditional Empty Flow Direction (TEFD) Policy:** Providing freight discounts (up to 15–20%) to customers for loading traffic in the empty flow direction.

- **Gati Shakti Cargo Terminals (GCT):** Fast-tracking the development of terminals to reduce detention times at loading/unloading points.

- **Stationary Asset Optimization:** Deployment of high-speed freight locomotives and the commissioning of **Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFCs)** to segregate freight and passenger traffic.

- **Dynamic Pricing:** Implementation of various incentive schemes for "Round Trip" loading to encourage back-haul traffic.

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