GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 478
TO BE ANSWERED ON 25.03.2026

GROWTH CONNECTOR-HIGH SPEED RAIL CORRIDORS

***478. SHRI DILESHWAR KAMAIT:**
SHRI SUNIL KUMAR:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has finalised the execution plan for seven new 'Growth Connector' high-speed rail corridors announced in Budget 2026-27 and if so, the details thereof;

(b) the details of number of Vande Bharat Sleeper rakes which are likely to be operational by the end of the year 2026 including the strategy for their deployment on routes exceeding 1,000 km;

(c) the details of the progress made towards the goal of launching Vande Bharat 4.0 with a design speed of 250 kmph for the upcoming high-speed corridors;

(d) whether regional cuisines and AI-driven passenger services are proposed to be introduced across all premium train sets by the year 2027 and if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether the Government is planning to construct a rail corridor from Darjeeling, West Bengal to Haridwar via Narkatiaganj, West Champaran and Gorakhpur and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)

(a) to (e): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

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STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF STARRED QUESTION NO. 478 TO BE ANSWERED ON 25.03.2026 IN LOK SABHA

(a) to (e): Presently, the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR) Project (508 km) is under execution. The Project is passing through the States of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Union Territory of Dadra & Nagar Haveli with 12 stations planned at Mumbai, Thane, Virar, Boisar, Vapi, Billimora, Surat, Bharuch, Vadodara, Anand, Ahmedabad and Sabarmati.

Entire land (1389.5 Ha.) for MAHSR project has been acquired. All Statutory Clearances have been obtained. All 1651 utilities have been shifted. The delay in land acquisition in the State of Maharashtra has impacted the project till 2021. The land acquisition picked up in 2022 in Maharashtra.

The progress of various major items so far is as under:

Item	Progress
Piers	430 kms.
Girder	341 kms.
Track Bed	174 kms.
OHE Masts	153 kms.

The progress of stations is given below:-

S.No.	Station	Status
1	Sabarmati	Foundation works completed, Platform slab & roof structural works and finishing works are in progress.
2	Ahmedabad	Structural works completed and finishing works have been taken up.
3	Anand/Nadiad	
4	Vadodara	Foundation work completed, structural works and finishing works have been taken up.
5	Bharuch	Structural works completed and finishing works have been taken up.
6	Surat	
7	Bilimora	
8	Vapi	
9	Boisar	Foundation works have been taken up and in advanced stage. Structural works have been
10	Virar	

11	Thane	taken up.
12	BKC (Mumbai)	This is an underground station. Foundation works almost completed and Base Slab has been taken up.

The progress on the River Bridges is as under:-

S. No.	River Name	Status
1	Sabarmati River (480m)	Sub-Structure work completed, Superstructure work has been taken up.
2	Meshwa River (120m)	Bridge construction completed.
3	Vatrak River (280m)	
4	Mohar (Shedhi) River (160m)	
5	Mahi River (720m)	11 out of 12 wells completed; 5 spans launched
6	Vishwamitri River (80m)	Bridge construction completed.
7	Dhadhar River (120m)	
8	Narmada River (1366m)	21 out of 25 wells completed; 4 spans launched
9	Kim River (120m)	Bridge construction completed.
10	Tapi River (720m)	Foundation work has been taken up, 10 out of 12 wells completed
11	Mindhola River (240m)	Bridge construction completed.
12	Purna River (360m)	
13	Ambika River (200m)	
14	Venganiya River (200m)	
15	Kaveri River (120m)	
16	Kharera River (120m)	
17	Auranga River (320m)	
18	Par River (320m)	
19	Kolak River (160m)	
20	Daman Ganga River (360m)	
21	Darotha River (80m)	
22	Jagani River (360m)	Foundation works have been completed
23	Vaitarna River (2320m)	12 Pile Cap and 11 Pier (out of 58) completed.
24	Ulhas River Branch (120m)	Temporary Access Bridge (TAB) completed to start the foundation work.

25	Desai Khadi River Bridge (400m)	Geo-technical Investigation (GTI) has been completed and Design work has been taken up.

The work of the under-sea tunnel (approximately 21 km) has commenced, out of which 4.8 km of tunnel between Ghansoli and Shilphata in Maharashtra has been completed.

Further, to strengthen national transport infrastructure, provide a fillip to regional connectivity, economic growth, tourism, investment and employment generation, and encourage modal shift from road and air transport to rail, the Government has announced the development of the following seven new High-Speed Rail (HSR) corridors in the Union Budget 2026-27: -

(i) Mumbai–Pune

(ii) Pune–Hyderabad

(iii) Hyderabad–Bengaluru

(iv) Hyderabad–Chennai

(v) Chennai–Bengaluru

(vi) Delhi–Varanasi

(vii) Varanasi–Siliguri

Being highly capital intensive, the decision to sanction any HSR Corridor/ Project depends on many factors such as outcome of DPR, techno-economic feasibility studies and availability of resources such as financing options etc.

Vande Bharat Sleeper Express:

For long distance travel the Sleeper variant of Vande Bharat Express has been indigenously designed and developed by Indian Railways. Presently, 2 Vande Bharat Sleeper services are in operation on the Indian Railway network. The First Vande Bharat Sleeper service viz. 27575/27576 Howrah-

Kamakhya Vande Bharat Sleeper Express has commenced regular operation w.e.f. 22.01.2026.

Broad technological advancements and safety features provided in these Vande Bharat Sleeper Trains are as below:

- **Jerk-Free Semi permanent couplers and Anti Climbers.**
- **Fitted with KAVACH.**
- **Higher acceleration with design/operating speed of 180/160 KMPH.**
- **Crashworthy Design of Car body complying with EN standards.**
- **Fire barrier doors at the end of each coach for compliance of Fire Safety standards.**
- **Aerosol based fire detection and suppression system in electrical cabinets and lavatories.**
- **Regenerative braking system for energy efficiency.**
- **Air conditioning units provided with indigenously developed UV-C lamp based disinfection system for deactivating 99% harmful bacteria from conditioned air to improve the hygiene standards inside the passenger area.**
- **Centrally controlled Automatic Plug Doors and fully sealed wider gangways.**
- **CCTVs in all coaches.**
- **Emergency talk-back unit for communication between Passenger and Train Manager/Loco Pilot in case of emergency.**
- **For Divyangjan passengers, special lavatory in the driving coaches on each end.**
- **Centralized Coach Monitoring System for better condition monitoring of passenger amenities such as Air conditioning, Saloon Lighting etc.**
- **Ergonomically designed ladder for ease of climbing on to upper berths.**

Regional Cuisines in Trains:

The Ministry of Railways vide Commercial Circular No. 25 of 2022 has given IRCTC flexibility to Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd. (IRCTC) to customize the menu in trains to include items of regional cuisines, seasonal delicacies and health food options, including millet-based products.

Under the above mandate, the menu has been designed by IRCTC based on passenger feedback.

IRCTC has introduced regional cuisines from time to time to offer a personalised experience to passengers of different regions. Some of the regional cuisines introduced in trains are as under:-

S. No.	States	Cuisine Items
1.	Odisha	Dalma, Chenna Poda
2.	Tamil Nadu	Set Dosai, Palakatti Chettinad
3.	Karnataka	Medu Vada
4	Rajasthan	Pyaz Kachori
5	Maharashtra	Vada Pav
6	West Bengal	Machher Jhol
7	Gujarat	Thepla
8	Jharkhand	Singara, Fuluri, Aloo Chokha, Aloo Parwal
9	Madhya Pradesh	Kanda Poha, Indori Poha, Sev Tamatar Sabji, Ajwain Paratha, Ragi Bhakhri, Patra Bhagar, Khoya Chicken, Ragi Thepla, Bhey

Introduction of these regional/local dishes has given passengers the opportunity to enjoy authentic local flavors and connect with the local culture.

Darjeeling-Haridwar Route:

Darjeeling and Haridwar are already connected with the existing railway network via Narkatiaganj, West Champaran and Gorakhpur. To further improve rail connectivity in the region, the following works have been sanctioned:

S. No.	Project/Section	Status
1	Siliguri – New Jalpaiguri doubling (7 Km)	DPR prepared
2	New Jalpaiguri – Aluabari Road 3rd & 4th Line (57 Km)	Recently sanctioned
3	Aluabari Road – Kumedpur 3rd & 4th Line (136 Km)	DPR prepared
4	Siliguri – Thakurganj Doubling (56 Km)	DPR prepared
5	Thakurganj – Aluabari Doubling (20 Km)	Recently sanctioned
6	Mukuria – Katihar Doubling (35 Km)	Work taken up
7	Kumedpur – Katihar Doubling (30 Km)	Work taken up
8	Katihar – Barauni 3rd & 4th Line (181 Km)	DPR prepared
9	Barauni – Bachwara 3rd & 4th Line (32 Km)	Work taken up
10	Bachwara – Gorakhpur 3rd & 4th Line (310 Km)	DPR prepared
11	Darbhanga – Narkatiaganj Doubling (38 Km)	Work taken up
12	Valmikinagar – Gorakhpur Doubling (96 Km)	Work taken up
13	Gorakhpur – Gonda 3rd & 4th Line (152 Km)	DPR prepared
14	Gonda – Burhwal 4th Line (56 Km)	Recently sanctioned
15	Burhwal – Sitapur 3rd & 4th Line (97 Km)	DPR prepared
16	Sitapur – Moradabad 3rd & 4th Line (248 Km)	DPR prepared

Sanctioning of any railway project depends upon many parameters/factors which include the following:

- **Anticipated traffic projections and remunerativeness of the proposed route**
- **First and last mile connectivity provided by the project**

- **Connection of missing links and providing additional route**
- **Augmentation of congested/saturated lines**
- **Demands raised by State Governments/Central Ministries/Public representatives**
- **Railway's own operational requirements**
- **Socio-economic considerations**
- **Overall availability of funds**

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