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## India to Produce 17,000 General and Non-AC Rail Coaches in Five Years, Says Vaishnaw

July 31, 2025

– Categories: General News



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India will manufacture approximately 17,000 general and non-air-conditioned (non-AC) railway coaches over the next five years, Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told the Lok Sabha, the lower house of Parliament. The move is aimed at meeting the rising demand for affordable travel, particularly among lower-income groups.

Speaking during a parliamentary session, Vaishnav noted that the number of general class coaches often preferred by passengers seeking budget-friendly travel has significantly increased in recent years. He emphasized that the government remains committed to ensuring accessible transportation options for all sections of society, particularly those in rural and economically weaker regions.

According to the minister, the planned manufacturing schedule will focus on expanding both general class and non-AC seating arrangements, ensuring capacity keeps pace with the growing demand in long-distance and regional rail services. These coaches will be designed to handle high passenger volumes while maintaining safety and operational efficiency.

The decision aligns with the Indian Railways' broader modernization strategy, which includes infrastructure upgrades, improved scheduling efficiency, and enhancements in passenger amenities. While much of the attention in recent years has been on high-speed rail projects and premium services, Vaishnav stressed that the needs of everyday travelers remain a priority.

Indian Railways, one of the world's largest rail networks, serves as the primary mode of transport for millions of people daily. For many, especially in rural and semi-urban areas, affordable general and non-AC coaches are the only viable option for long-distance travel. Increasing their availability is expected to help reduce overcrowding and improve travel conditions.

Vaishnav also highlighted that these manufacturing efforts will be undertaken in various production units across the country, ensuring that the initiative supports domestic manufacturing and employment generation. This aligns with the government's "Make in India" policy, which promotes domestic production and self-reliance in key infrastructure sectors.

The Railways Ministry has been under growing pressure to address passenger complaints about overcrowding, delays, and inadequate facilities in general class compartments. By committing to the large-scale production of these coaches, the government aims to address these concerns while balancing the investment in premium services and modernization projects.

The minister concluded by stating that the initiative reflects a balanced approach to development, investing in modern, high-speed rail while ensuring that affordable travel remains widely available. The manufacturing of 17,000 general and non-AC coaches over the next five years is positioned as a significant step toward improving accessibility and comfort for millions of Indian passengers.