



Report Summary

High Level Safety Review Committee (Railways)

The Ministry of Railways had appointed a High Level Safety Review Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Anil Kakodkar to review the safety of the Indian Railways and recommend improvements. The Committee recently presented its report.

If the Committee's recommendations are accepted, the total financial implication over the five year period is likely to be Rs 1,00,000 crore.

The key observations and recommendations of the Committee are listed below:

- The Committee notes that the 'present environment on Indian Railways reveals a grim picture of inadequate performance' largely due to poor infrastructure and resources, and lack of empowerment at the functional level.
- The financial state of Indian Railways is 'at the brink of collapse' unless some concrete measures are taken. Passenger fares have not been increased in the last decade and the infrastructure is severely strained. All safety margins have been squeezed. This has led to a neglect of infrastructure maintenance.
- In the present situation, the three vital functions (rule making, operations and the regulation) are all vested in the Railway Board. There is need for an independent mechanism for safety regulation. The Committee recommends the creation of a statutory Railway Safety Authority with enough powers to have a safety oversight on the operational mode of Railways.
- The Research Design and Standards Organization (RDSO), the apex technical wing of the Railways, is highly constrained. This has hampered the ability of the system to internalize emerging technologies. The Committee recommends restructuring of RDSO for greater empowerment. It also recommends that a Railway Research and Development Council (RRDC) be set up directly under the government.
- The Committee recommends the adoption of an Advanced Signalling System (akin to the European Train Control System) for the entire trunk route length of 19,000 km within 5 years. This is estimated to cost Rs 20,000 crore.
- All Level Crossings (both manned and unmanned) should be eliminated over five years. An estimated expenditure of Rs 50,000 crore will be required for achieving this target. The Committee is of the belief that this amount will be recovered within 7-8 years through savings in maintenance costs and improved train operations.
- The Committee also recommends a switch over from the ICF design coaches to the much safer LHB design coaches. This is likely to cost Rs 10,000 crore over the next five years.
- Other Committee recommendations on the maintenance of safety related infrastructure are estimated to cost about Rs 20,000 crore

DISCLAIMER: This document is being furnished to you for your information. You may choose to reproduce or redistribute this report for non-commercial purposes in part or in full to any other person with due acknowledgement of PRS Legislative Research ("PRS"). The opinions expressed herein are entirely those of the author(s). PRS makes every effort to use reliable and comprehensive information, but PRS does not represent that the contents of the report are accurate or complete. PRS is an independent, not-for-profit group. This document has been prepared without regard to the objectives or opinions of those who may receive it.

