

**PRESS RELEASE**

**OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL OF INDIA**

**New Delhi**

**20th August, 2025**

**CAG Performance Audit Report on Union Government (Railways) presented in  
Parliament**

Comptroller and Auditor General of India Report No.15 of 2025 - Union Government (Railways) - Performance Audit was laid on the table of both Houses of the Parliament here today.

The Audit Report contains results of the performance audit of “Cleanliness and Sanitation in long distance trains in Indian Railways” covering the period from 2018-19 to 2022-23. Information relating to the period subsequent to 2022-23 have also been included, wherever necessary, to update the status of audit observations.

**Synopsis of the Report:**

Indian Railways (IR) runs 12,541 passenger trains carrying more than 17.52 million passengers per day and passing through more than 7,364 Railway Stations over the network. Given the high volume of passenger traffic, it is of utmost importance to maintain high standards of hygiene as it involves issues of public health and safety in addition to aesthetics.

This Performance Audit was conducted to assess whether the plans and policies framed by the Ministry of Railways had improved the state of cleanliness in long distance trains. Audit also focused on assessing whether the measures taken on cleanliness and sanitation by Indian Railways at the Coaching Depots located at source and destination stations as well as during the course of the journey, and the feedback mechanism, had resulted in improvement in the system of maintaining cleanliness and sanitation.

The major audit findings are as below:

**Budget and expenditure on cleanliness activities in trains**

The actual expenditure in excess of the Final Budget Grant (FBG) was in the range of 100 *per cent* (SR) to 141 *per cent* (NCR). Similarly, utilisation of fund below 95 *per cent* of the Final Budget Grant ranged between 63 *per cent* (ECR) to 94 *per cent* (SWR).

During 2022-23, under the Head 'Linen Management', all zones incurred expenditure in excess of FBG ranging from 102 *per cent* (WCR) to 145 *per cent* (NER). There was under-utilisation of FBG for 'Linen Management' in 11 zones due to COVID pandemic. In respect of 'Coach Sanitation', utilisation was in the range of 102 *per cent* (SWR) to 147 *per cent* (NCR).

### **External cleaning of coaches at Coaching Depots**

Infrastructural advancements in the form of Automatic Coach Washing Plants (ACWPs) were set up across zones. ACWP saves about 7160 litres of fresh water in comparison to manual washing of a train comprising of 24 coaches. During 2018-2023, 56 ACWPs were commissioned. The layout and operational constraints, however, led to under-utilisation of some ACWPs. Due to infrastructural constraints, washing of 1,32,060 coaches was done externally through the Mechanised Coach Cleaning Contracts. During joint inspection of 24 ACWPs with the Railway Officials, it was observed that eight (33 *per cent*) ACWPs were not in operation due to breakdown or repair works.

### **En-route and On-board cleaning of coaches**

The Clean Train Stations (CTS) scheme was introduced for mechanised cleaning of sensitive areas of the coaches such as bio-toilets, doorway areas and vestibules during the halt of trains at en-route stations. The intended benefits, however, could not be fully derived due to failure of the Railway Administration in enforcing contract conditions by deploying required resources to ensure cleanliness and sanitation within the stipulated 10-15 minutes halt time at Clean Train Stations.

During joint inspections in 29 CTS across 12 zones, audit observed limited cleaning of toilets and other areas, shortfall in usage of machines and deployment of manpower.

In October 2007, RB issued comprehensive guidelines for on-board attention of cleaning of coaches. Railway Board emphasised that On Board Housekeeping services (OBHS) should result in perceptible improvement in the standard of cleanliness and hygiene in trains. A test check of 73 contracts related to OBHS services of the selected 32 Coaching Depots in 16 zones revealed that penalty of ₹9.62 crore was recovered from the contractors on account of deficiencies such as shortfall of manpower and machinery, non utilisation of specified cleaning agents, *etc.*

Passenger satisfaction in respect of OBHS ranged between 54 *per cent* and 84 *per cent* except in Northern Railway and North Central Railway where the satisfaction level was more than 95 *per cent* of the surveyed passengers.

Mobile Application for Desired Assistance During travel (Rail Madad) was implemented in July 2018. Increase in awareness among passengers led to surge in complaints since implementation of Rail Madad. The complaints related to coach cleanliness increased by 229 *per cent* during 2022-23 (2,42,431) as compared to the year 2019-20 (69,950).

The existing monitoring and internal control mechanism could not prevent manipulations in the attendance system by the contractual agencies, discrepancies in conducting police verification, shortfall in conducting the scheduled inspections and constraints of water availability.

### **Quick watering arrangement in trains**

Water availability in coaches is one of the essential passenger requirements. There were, however, frequent complaints from the public regarding non-availability of water either due to non-filling up water or inadequate filling up at the nominated watering station. To address the issue, Railway Board decided (September 2017) to make provision of Quick Watering Arrangement (QWA) at the watering stations.

Audit observed that out of the 109 stations identified for making provision for QWA, facilities for quick watering were in operation at 81 stations (74 *per cent*) as on 31 March 2023. At 28 stations across nine zones, there was delay in setting up of QWA ranging from two to four years as of March 2023 for reasons such as fund constraints, slow progress of work by contractor, shelving/shifting of work, *etc.*

A total of 1,00,280 complaints regarding non-availability of water in toilets and wash-basins in the coaches were reported over IR during 2022-23. In 33,937 cases (33.84 *per cent*) the time taken for addressing the issue exceeded the expected timeline.

### **Cleanliness of bio-toilets in long distance trains**

A detailed survey was conducted in respect of 2,426 on-board passengers in 96 selected trains. The percentage of dissatisfaction amongst the surveyed passengers was higher (50 *per cent* and above) in five zones and lower (below 10 *per cent*) in two zones. Significant number of complaints (89 *per cent*) related to cleaning of toilets in trains were addressed within the stipulated time. It was observed that the position of bio-toilets is better in AC coaches compared to that in non-AC coaches.

### **Setting up of mechanised laundries and provision of linen in trains**

Mechanised laundries were set up across zones to enhance the quality of washing of linen being provided to passengers. Feedback from passengers regarding the quality of linen supplied was, however, not enforced upon the linen distribution contractors. Audit observed that passenger complaints were comparatively less in the zones where the feedback was being obtained by the linen distribution contractors.

### **Good Practices**

During the joint inspection, Audit observed that BOOT Laundry at Kankaria Depot of WR had been operating in an economical, effective and environment friendly manner. The laundry adopted certain best practices such as high efficiency thermic fluid heater, closed loop circulation of hot oil for efficient drying of linen at the ironers and recycling of water

after washing of linen in Effluent Treatment Plants. These activities, if replicated at other places, can help the Railway Administration in achieving the benefits of mechanised cleaning in an environment friendly manner.

---

**BSC/SS/55-25**