

Will be ruthless against mediocrity, Vaishnaw tells railway industry

DHRUVAKSH SAHA

New Delhi, 15 October

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Wednesday said there would be “absolutely no mercy” on those supplying low-quality material to railways while asking the rail component industry to overhaul its processes.

Asking the track equipment industry to look inward on its manufacturing processes and push for an overhaul, Vaishnaw said, “Incrementalism will not work now. Please be prepared, those who do not improve will lose out,” he told a gathering of private sector executives at Confederation of Indian Industry’s Indian Railway Equipment Exhibition 2025 event here.

The minister gave an “open call” to the industry to improve processes and said that he has requested the railway board to appoint people who are ruthless in checking processes.

“They should actually debar, delist, and sometimes even blacklist people who are manufacturing substandard quality equipment, absolutely no mercy on the people who are supplying low-quality material to railways,” Vaishnaw said. The ministry will be in pursuit of world-class indigenous capacity as it moves towards building high-speed

dedicated passenger corridors. “Capacity has to increase substantially, and not only for conventional railway tracks. These (dedicated passenger corridors and expansion of conventional tracks) will be very important focus points in the coming years,” he said.

Vaishnaw also said the ministry has set a target of around 7,000 kilometres of high speed rail corridors to be constructed by 2047, with most of these dedicated passenger corridors designed for speeds of up to 350 km per hour. He urged all equipment manufacturers to improve manufacturing, quality control, material selection, procurement, heat treatment of materials, final assembly, and other parts of the value chain.

“We will significantly improve the processes which go into manufacturing track components. I know many of the component manufacturers may not like it, but it’s very important for the safety of our passengers. We have to improve the specifications by at least ten times, whether it is signalling, earthing, track, or equipment used in manufacturing of locomotives

and coaches,” he said.

He said Research Design and Standards Organisation (RDSO) has been working on this idea for three years and these substantial changes in the ministry’s benchmarks will be announced in the coming months. The minister asked the industry to bring new innovations to match the requirements for next-generation reforms in Vande Bharat, Kavach, and Amrit Bharat trains.

After the ministry decided to continue with the fourth version of the indigenous automatic train protection system (Kavach 4.0), Vaishnaw said that work will start to up the ante for the system and make it consistent with modern speeds.

“We will keep rolling out Kavach 4.0 for some years, and in parallel develop Kavach 5.0, which will be designed for high speeds of 280 kmph. This will also then become the standard system for all the dedicated passenger products. This will have our own signalling and operations command centre,” he said.

Vaishnaw also called for next-generation improvements in Vande Bharat trains.

