

Decision Taken to Create a Permanent Mechanism of "Standing Intra-Government Technical Collaboration Panel" (SITCOP)

Railway Ministry Takes Major Step Towards Scientific and Technical Collaboration Among Major Government Technical and Scientific Agencies for Development of Special Material and Technologies for Improving Railway Rolling Stock

As a major boost for Government of India's Make In India initiative, Minister for Railways, Shri Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu has envisioned unprecedented approach for creation of a Scientific & Technological Collaboration Forum among major Government Technical and Scientific agencies for development of special material and technologies for improving railway rolling stock for providing safer, more comfortable, more efficient and economical services to its customers. The aim is to reduce Indian Railways dependence on other countries and give impetus to creation of new technologies within India by creating an organized synergy between major government bodies in the field of scientific and technological research and production. This will help in developing systems for Indian Railways which are best suited to the country's local conditions and needs. Also, it would create a constantly evolving rolling stock technology development process to create exportable products like coaches, locomotive, wagons, cranes, special vehicles etc.

As a first step in this direction, Ministry of Railways convened a round table session on 25th April, 2016 at Rail Bhawan with Heads of ISRO, CSIR, DRDO, RDSO, Deptt. of Science and Technology and Deptt. of Defence Production. The meeting was chaired by Shri Manoj Sinha, Minister of State for Railways. The areas in which Indian Railways sought collaboration were structural material, paneling material for coaches, germicidal and wear resistant furnishing material, coating and special paints with better cleaning properties and pest control capability, noise and thermal insulation material, fog vision technologies, embedded systems for onboard condition monitoring of rolling stock, facial and gesture recognition software for security cameras on trains, solar heat engines, etc. DRDO made a detailed presentation about special material developed by them for use in defense and space applications which included special high strength alloys of steel and aluminium. Also, special technologies for developing Fog vision and for detection of obstructions on track using laser based imaging systems were shared. Special coatings which have been developed for use on naval warships by DRDO were also shared for possible use by Railways. Development of Maglev and special alloy aluminium coaches were identified as areas for cooperation for development of prototypes.

The meeting ended with announcement of a permanent mechanism of Standing Intra-Government Technical Collaboration Panel (SITCOP) to converge Government's internal capabilities to create better and futuristic rolling stock for Indian Railways with minimal foreign dependence in critical areas. The SITCOP shall meet twice a year to review progress on collaborative projects assigned to inter-area action teams assigned by the body.