

Rail Minister Prabhu meets Japanese PM

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New Delhi: India has sought participation of the Japanese government and companies in modernisation and technology up-gradation of the Indian Railways, an official said on Wednesday.

Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu, on a three-day visit to Japan, met Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in this regard and sought funds and technology for the Indian rail network, the railway ministry said here in a statement.

Prabhu also met the top Japanese leadership and senior officials of leading financial institutions during his visit there between September 7 and 9.

"He (Prabhu) highlighted that railways would be the next major destination for infrastructure investment in India and invited investment from Japan," the ministry said.

"Participation of Japanese railways and Japanese companies in various areas of Indian railways with the aim of modernisation and technology up-gradation was also emphasised in the discussions."

The ministry elaborated that the Japanese side has "in principle" agreed on many aspects of cooperation, including technology and fund assistance.

"The items agreed included participation of Japanese railways in zero-accident mission of the Indian railways and assistance for development of a legal and regulatory framework on high speed railways (HSR)," the statement said.

"Use of Japanese expertise and technology in solving problems of sanitation including the development of waterless, odourless toilets in trains and at stations."

Other planned activities between the two sides include an MoU (memorandum of understanding) to be signed between Lucknow-based Research Designs and Standards Organization (RDSO) and the Railway Technical Research Institute (RTRI), Japan.

An official mission from Japan is also expected to visit India on a study tour to assess the opportunities in the railway station redevelopment plan.

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