

Rs 8 Crore saloon train coach planned for the new President of India



The Railway Ministry of India has already sanctioned out its plan to build a special saloon coach worth Rs 8 Crores for the yet-to-be-elected new President of India.

India may be yet to elect its new President, but the Railway Ministry is all overzealous about the new leader and has already planned out to build a special Presidential saloon coach. The regal twin coaches called 'saloon coaches' are a trend from British rule when the 'gora saheb' used to travel in these premium across the country with pride. After independence, the coaches were used by Presidents for official tours and journeys; but Dr APJ Abdul Kalam was the last President to journey in the saloon in 2006 after which travel through saloon coaches was declared to be unsafe for leaders and inconvenient for public.

The premium saloon coaches are a set of twin bogies consist of a conference hall, lounge, study rooms and a cabin for the President's military secretary, dedicated to the President and these coaches are attached to public trains or lead by a special engine. The Railways had proposed a sanctioned amount of Rs 6 Crore to build a saloon coach when President Pranab Mukherjee was elected in 2007 but his secretariat cited security concerns - besides possible disruption of passenger traffic to reject the plan in 2008.

Railways has once again proposed a plan for 2017 President and this time, if accepted, the saloon will be built on the German LHB design coach platform. It will be studded with modern features like Plasma TV sets, GPS and GPRS enable coaches, bulletproof windows, Immersat satellite antennas, modular kitchen, public addressing system and built-in 20-line telephone exchange among the exclusive features, not counting the premium features which are included by default. All this at the cost of Rs 8 Crore from the national treasury!