

crossings took place due to negligence of road vehicle drivers in observing the safety precautions while negotiating unmanned level crossings as laid down in the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988.

**Facilities to handicapped and disabled persons**

2603. SHRI JAIPRAKASH NARAYAN SINGH:

SHRI SALIM ANSARI:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) the facilities being provided to handicapped and disabled persons by Railways at various railway stations;
- (b) whether handicapped and disabled persons are not allowed preferential treatment in various compartments; and
- (c) if so, the steps being taken to provide assistance at railway stations and provide special comfortable berths in trains to this category of persons?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BHARATSINH SOLANKI): (a) Short term facilities, *viz.* Provision of standard ramp for barrier free entry, earmarking two parking lots, signage of appropriate visibility, at least one drinking water tap suitable for use by a disabled person, provision of at least one toilet on the ground floor and “May I help You” booth, have already been provided at all A1 and A category stations, and are now being extended to all B category stations.

Long-terms facilities *viz.* Provision of facility for inter-platform transfer and Engraving on edges of platforms shall be taken up after provision of short-term facilities.

(b) and (c) In the modified guard-van (SLRD) coaches, separate compartment with two berths and one toilet for persons with disabilities are being provided. Two upper berths for attendants have also been provided. These coaches are provided with wider entrance doors, handrails on side walls, wider aisle, larger lavatory with wider entrance, additional grab rails in the toilet and lower height of wash basin and mirror.

A reservation quota of two sleeper class berths has been earmarked in all trains running on non-suburban sections excluding Rajdhani/Shatabdi/Duranto/Janshatabdi/Garib Rath Express trains for handicapped persons performing their journey on handicapped concessional ticket. In Garib Rath Express trains, 4 berths accommodation in SLRD coach has been earmarked for handicapped persons who can book it on payment of full fare on production of requisite certificate on first come first serve basis. In all Mail/Express trains, the SLRD coaches are treated as unreserved coaches earmarked for exclusive use of physically handicapped passengers. These facilities are, however, not available in fully reserved trains.

Berths in the compartment with disabilities are wider and have more leg space between them to accommodate wheel chair. For easy movement of handicapped and disabled persons, wheel chairs at stations are provided free of cost, duly escorted by coolies (on payment). Moreover, Zonal Railways have also been advised to provide 'Battery Operated Vehicles for Disabled and Old Age Passengers' at Railway stations through commercial publicity route.

**Expenditure on operating passenger services**

†2604. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD :

SHRI RAMCHANDRA PRASAD SINGH:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that a loss of about Rs. 14,000 crore has been estimated to have occurred under operation of the passenger services in Railways;
- (b) if so, the facts in this regard;
- (c) whether Government has taken any corrective steps for cutting expenditure on operation of passenger services over the last few years; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and when such steps were taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BHARATSINH SOLANKI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The loss of around Rs. 14,000 crore has been estimated in the year 2008-09 and which includes other coaching services also.

(c) and (d) Railways view expenditure on Passenger Services as expenditure in public interest and efforts towards expenditure control are confined to improvement of operational efficiencies. It has been constant endeavor on the part of the Railways to contain expenditure through various means such as;

1. Efforts to effect savings in revenue expenditure through more efficient use of assets so as to overcome impact of increase in diesel prices, hike in power tariff, increase in rates of certain allowances/incentive bonus etc. The expenditure is closely monitored through monthly financial reviews.
2. Tight control over expenditure in areas such as fuel/power consumption, contractual payments, purchase of materials etc. is maintained.
3. Prioritization of expenditure on works/activities for better use of available resources.
4. Improvement in Manpower productivity.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.