

Windows, UIC Vestibule etc. Specifications for such furnishing materials have been periodically upgraded to incorporate fire retardant parameters in line with International Union of Railways (UIC) and other international norms. All new manufacture of coaches/periodical overhauling of existing coaches is being carried out with fire retardant specifications of the furnishing materials.

- II. Railways have also taken measures to prevent fire due to electrical short circuits in coaches, which include (a) three levels of protection in non AC coaches in case of short circuit, (b) separation of positive and negative wires, (c) use of fire retardant material in all electrical items.
- III. With a view to improve fire safety in running trains, a pilot project for provision of Comprehensive Fire and Smoke Detection System has been taken up in one rake of Rajdhani Express on Northern Railway. Similar automatic fire alarm system in 20 more rakes for extended field trials has also been decided. The system will provide advance warning in case of any fire hazard in running train and thus enable the passengers to protect them from fire.
- IV. Guard-cum-Brake Van and AC Coaches in all trains are provided with portable fire extinguishers to cater for emergencies due to fire accidents.
- V. Detailed instructions have been issued to zonal railways for observance of safe practices in handling of pantry cars and for ensuring periodical inspection of electrical and LPG fittings in the pantry cars.
- VI. Intensive publicity campaigns to prevent the travelling public from carrying inflammable goods are regularly undertaken.
- VII. Two separate Fire Safety Audit Teams have been constituted recently to plan safety audit in selective stations, coaching depots and workshops, etc.

Development of anti-collision device

891. SHRI ISHWAR SINGH:

SHRI N.K. SINGH:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways have been unable to develop a robust and reliable anticollision device to prevent train mishaps despite carrying out field trials for over a decade;

(b) if so, whether there were operational and technical problems during trials on Southern Railway and the North-East Frontier Railway; and

(c) if so, the details and time-frame in which they are likely to be resolved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI BHARATSINH SOLANKI): (a) to (c) Development and deployment of

indigenous Global Positioning System (GPS) based Anti-Collision Device (ACD) was taken up by Konkan Railway Corporation Limited (KRCL) as a pilot project on 1736 route kilometers on single/double line non electrified Broad Gauge section of Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) and it has been in service trials since 2006.

Based on the experience of the NFR, to improve reliability and dependability of ACDs and to test its functioning on multiple lines as well as electrified routes, the specifications and design configuration were revised and the system as evolved was tried on the electrified multiple lines, automatic signalling section of the Southern Railway in 2010-2011.

Complex operational and technical issues observed during both the trials are being examined by KRCL for taking remedial measures.

As an improvement over ACD, action has also been taken by Indian Railways to develop Train Collision Avoidance System (TCAS) through multiple vendors for which Expression of Interest (EoI) was floated and six indigenous firms have been shortlisted.

At this stage, no definite time frame can be given as the development of safety systems involve verification, validation and certification of performance against stringent safety parameters.

Appointment of agents by IRCTC

†892. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether principal agent appointed by IRCTC recruits a number of sub-agents under him;
- (b) if so, whether this arrangement is not benefitting the principal agent as mostly action is taken against the sub-agent only in matters related to black marketing of railway tickets;
- (c) the criteria fixed for appointing a principal agent;
- (d) whether on booking directly from IRCTC, one has to pay an extra Rs. 10 on sleeper and Rs. 20 on AC Berth whereas it puts less pressure on ticket counters; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BHARATSINH SOLANKI): (a) Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) appoints principal agents who in turn can appoint sub agents under them.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.