

(c) The reasons for the marginal decline in passenger traffic in 2013-14 include change in Advance Reservation Period (ARP) from 120 days to 60 days, impact of fare rationalization, changed norms/regulations in the issue of concessional tickets particularly in case of Izzat MSTs, closure of certain sections etc.

Stressed loco pilot

1514. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that harsh punishment for stressed loco pilots is forcing them to take their own lives;

(b) the number of loco pilots and assistant pilots who committed suicides during the last three years; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to provide weekly/calendar day rest schedules for loco pilots and putting a cap on continuous night duty cycles for them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) In case of every accident, a high level enquiry is conducted. In such enquiry, if a Loco Pilot is found to have violated laid down rules, which resulted/contributed to the accident, then disciplinary action is initiated and after getting representation from charged Loco Pilot and a detailed enquiry, as applicable, punishment is imposed, in accordance with the laid down norms and keeping in view the circumstances of the case.

(b) During the last three years, only one case of suicide by an Assistant Loco Pilot has come to notice.

(c) Weekly/calendar day rest to loco pilots on the Railways is regulated in accordance with Section 133 of the Railways Act, 1989. As per extant instructions, performance of continuous night duty by loco pilots should not normally exceed six nights at a stretch. Due to round the clock operation in Railways, it is not feasible to avoid night duty. Monitoring of duty, rest hours and continuous night duty cycle is being ensured by Zonal Railways as per laid down rules and regulations. Further, progressive implementation of computerized Crew Management System (CMS) for better monitoring of duty, rest hours and continuous night duty cycle of running staff is also being ensured.

Automatic ticket checking and fare collection system

1515. SHRI RANJIB BISWAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Railways plan to introduce high-tech automatic ticket checking and fare collection systems across its vast network;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and its aims and objectives;
- (c) the details of benefits that are likely to accrue to Railways and the passengers; and
- (d) when the systems are likely to be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) to (d) Automatic Fare Collection system has already been introduced on Metro Railway Kolkata since 2011. Under this system, the Automatic Gates check and control passenger entry and exit without manual intervention and also ensures fare collection. By introducing this system manual checking of tickets has been done away with, resulting in faster and orderly entry and exit of commuters. This facility has however, not been introduced on other stations of Indian Railways.

For automation of on-board ticket checking system on Indian Railways, Hand Held Terminals were initially provided to ticket checking staff in 12 pairs of trains. Expansion of Hand Held Terminal usage has been sanctioned for 73 more pair of trains on Indian Railways. Hand Held Terminals enable the ticket checking staff to download the chart of the coach allotted to them and to allot vacant berths/seats available due to non turning up of passengers to Reservation Against Cancellation (RAC) passengers. It brings transparency in the working of TTEs as well as generates additional railway revenue due to utilization of vacant seats/berths on trains. Introduction of such projects on automation and their proliferation is a continuous and ongoing process.

Basic facilities at Railway Stations

†1516. SHRI ASHK ALI TAK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that basic facilities like drinking water and dustbins are not available at many railway stations; and
- (b) if so, whether Government would issue guidelines with regard to providing basic amenities at railway stations, if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) No, Sir. However, improvement/augmentation of amenities including drinking water and dustbins at the railway stations is a continuous process.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.