

Improving passenger amenities and services

1481. SHRI AJAY SANCHETI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of measures taken by Railways to improve passenger amenities and services;

(b) whether any blue print has been drawn for timely implementation of these initiatives, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of work performed so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) to (c) Improvement, augmentation and maintenance of amenities at Railway Stations on Indian Railways is a continuous process and is undertaken as per requirement and availability of funds. Certain amenities are provided at the time of construction of the new stations based on anticipated traffic. Amenities are further augmented from time to time based on growth in passenger traffic at stations, needs and expectations of the travelling public and availability of funds. In addition, normal works are taken up for upgradation of passenger amenities under 'Adarsh Station Scheme'. Out of 1252 stations identified under this scheme, 988 stations have already been developed. Conceptualization of the schemes for providing amenities/facilities to passengers and its Implementation is a continuous process. Important initiatives taken by the Railways in the last three years to improve amenities of passengers are as under:

1. The e-ticketing system was upgraded with the launch of the Next Generation E-ticketing System (NGeT) for improving accessibility and enhancing the overall experience of e-ticketing. The capacity for E-ticketing System was enhanced to book 7200 tickets per minute from 2000 tickets earlier and to support 1,20,000 concurrent users as against 40,000 earlier in 2014. This has been further augmented to support booking of 15,000 tickets per minute.
2. Go-India Smart Card introduced to facilitate cashless transaction in New Delhi-Mumbai and New Delhi-Howrah sectors.
3. Establishment of Yatri Ticket Suvidha Kendras for issuing of tickets through public private partnership for establishment and operation of computerised Passenger Reservation System(PRS)-cum Unreserved Ticketing System(UTS) terminals.
4. Cleanliness campaign under Swachh Bharat Mission was launched by Indian Railways on 2nd October, 2014 Gandhi Jayanti Divas, involving shramdaan and

awareness activities. Under the Swachh Bharat Mission, several initiatives have been taken to re-inforce the existing mechanism for ensuring cleanliness at stations.

5. Facility for booking unreserved ticket through mobile phone was introduced in the suburban sections over Mumbai and Chennai to facilitate passengers to book unreserved ticket through mobile.
6. Facility for online concessional ticket booking facility for Physically Challenged persons on the authority of Photo Identity Card issued by the Railways.
7. Online registration of booking of special trains/ coaches on Full Tariff Rates was started as a pilot project over Western Railway.
8. Advance Reservation Period (ARP) was increased from 60 to 120 days to help passengers plan and purchase tickets in advance.
9. All India 24x7 Helpline Number 138 was provided to passengers for queries, complaints and suggestions regarding onboard services
10. Checks on Touting through modifications in the PRS software to prevent cornering of tickets by Touts like automatic log out after one transaction.
11. Revision of Platform Ticket Rates from ₹ 5 to ₹ 10 to regulate rush on platforms.
12. Increase in General Class Accommodation on Trains for general class passengers on long distance Mail/Express trains by delegating powers to General Managers to de-reserve Sleeper Class coaches as General Coaches in identified trains and sectors.
13. Paperless Unreserved tickets on Mobile introduced as a part of "Operation 5 Minutes" in Chennai suburban section of Tambaram-Egmore on Southern Railway.
14. Running of Special Trains with special fares over and above time-tabled trains to clear extra rush and augment passenger services.
15. Facility of SMS alerts through mobile phones in case of cancellation of trains was introduced for convenience of passengers.
16. The capacity of PRS server was enhanced from 7000 to 15,000 tickets per minute.
17. The Tatkal timings were staggered for AC and Non-AC accommodation to facilitate easy purchase of Tatkal tickets.
18. Facility of automatic Refund of Confirmed/RAC e-tickets on cancellation of trains was provided.

19. Powers to make policy to provide clean toilets to travelling public at stations was fully delegated to the Zonal Railways.
20. Paperless UTS tickets on Mobile extended to the suburban sections of Mumbai both on Western Railway and Central Railway.
21. Destination alert by SMS introduced on mobile phone for passengers 30 minutes in advance of arrival of train at destination station in Rajdhani, Duronto and Sampark kranti Express trains as a pilot project.
22. Suvidha Trains with graded pricing structure introduced to meet demand surges during peak demand with facility of limited refund on cancellation of ticket.
23. Hindi Portal of IRCTC was launched to facilitate booking of tickets using Hindi language.
24. Additional lower berths for senior citizen and women (increased from 2 to 4) were earmarked in the centre of the coach for women and senior citizens.
25. Defence Travel System to facilitate booking of tickets online for Defence personnel to eliminate exchange of defence warrants was rolled out on the NGeT platform. Till date more than 2600 Defence units have started issuing tickets through this platform without exchange of warrants.
26. Concierge services with facility for online booking of wheelchairs through IRCTC website at New Delhi and 23 other stations was commenced.
27. Paperless UTS tickets on Mobile extended to the suburban sections of Delhi-Paiwal in Delhi Division of Northern Railway.
28. Currency Operated Automatic Ticket Vending Machine (CoVTM) to facilitate purchase of unreserved journey tickets provided in Delhi and Mumbai.
29. Station Ticket Booking Agents (STBA) Scheme - a regular STBA scheme based on the pilot STBS scheme was notified for issue of tickets through outsourcing at E category stations.
30. Facility for paperless MST on Mobile phones launched in sub-urban sectors of Mumbai in WR and CR and in the Delhi-Palwal section of NR.
31. Platform ticket on Mobile launched for WR, CR and NR (New Delhi and Hazrat Nizamuddin Railway stations).
32. New Refund Rules was notified which has helped in curbing speculative buying and selling of tickets and improving availability of berths for common man.

33. Facility for current reservation facility through internet and at all PRS locations after preparation of first chart upto minutes before departure of train.
34. Increase in number of berths for handicapped for Physically Challenged from 2 to 4 berths.
35. Berths for child tickets (5 yrs and above and below 12 yrs) made optional which has helped in providing additional reserved accommodation without any additional inputs by railways equivalent to more than 20,000 additional trains in a year or 54 additional trains per day.
36. UTS on Mobile extended to other sections of Howrah (3) and Sealdah (5) Division of ER and SER (24.02.2016).
37. Instructions already exist with zonal railways to provide one wheel chair per platform and in case of island platforms one wheelchair per two platforms at all A-1 and A category stations.
38. Instructions issued to zonal railways to introduce the facility of battery operated cars through service provider for carrying passengers on payment basis initially at all A-1 category stations.
39. Online booking of retiring room has been commissioned at 488 Railway stations.
40. As per existing guidelines, escalators/elevators are to be provided at 'A1' category and escalators at 'A' category, 'C' category stations and stations of tourist importance progressively based on techno commercial feasibility and availability of funds. So far, 295 number of escalators and 146 number of lifts have been provided over the Indian Railways.
41. Improvement of catering services is an on-going process. In its endeavour to provide quality and hygienic food to the passengers, Railways have developed and operationalized an institutionalized mechanism for monitoring of quality and hygiene of catering services through regular inspections at various levels to address catering complaints.

Further, Steps taken/ being taken to ensure that good quality and hygienic food is served to the passengers include: (i) Introduction of station based E-Catering for widening the range of options available to passengers for ordering food of their choice, (ii) Introduction of precooked food ('ready to eat' meals) in the range of options available to passengers, (iii) Operation of centralized Catering Service Monitoring Cell (CSMC) (toll free number 1800-111-321) for prompt redressal of passenger grievances

relating to the catering activities and real time assistance to travelling public, (iv) Imposition of penalties in case of deficiencies detected in services, (v) Operation of all India Helpline (No. 138) for rail-users to lodge complaints/suggestions regarding food and catering services (vi) A Twitter handle@IRCATERING has also been made operational to cater to the complaints/ suggestions with regard to catering services.

Steps have already been taken for implementing some of the new initiatives for improvement of catering services like extension of e-catering services to all A1 and A category stations, Janani Sewa Scheme, availability of Children's Menu through e-catering, optional catering on Rajdhani/Shatabdi Express Trains (2 trains) on pilot basis etc.

Improvement of passenger amenities being provided in the coaches is a continual process on Indian Railways. Details of the amenities which are presently provided in the coaches are as under:

- Cushioned seats/berths, fluorescent light, Air-conditioning, fans, toilet, dustbins and washbasin facilities, etc. in all mainline trains/coaches being manufactured.
- Looking mirrors, snack tables, magazine bags, water bottle holders, coat hooks, small luggage racks, luggage securing arrangements, mobile/laptop charging sockets, etc. in all mainline reserved coaches.
- On board/ enroute cleaning facility on identified trains.
- Seats (cushioned seats in First Class coach). Handholds, fans, lights etc. in sub-urban coaches and dedicated coaches for ladies and vendors in sub-urban trains.
- Bed rolls in all mainline AC sleeper coaches.
- Water in coaches provided with toilets.

Passenger Information System (PIS) have been provided at all 'A1' and A category stations. In addition to this policy for provision of WiFi Internet facility at all A1, A and B category stations have also been issued.

Conversion of unmanned railway level crossings into manned railway level crossings

1482. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) how many unmanned railway level crossings have been manned during the period from May, 2014 to May, 2016;