

of Archaeological Survey of India if the alignment passes in vicinity of a protected monument, local bodies for projects passing through urban areas, etc which are part of project execution. Process of seeking the approvals/clearances causes delay in completion of the projects. As a result, most of the ongoing projects are running behind schedule and facing cost overruns. In addition, as per the prevailing system, funds are allocated on yearly basis based on the Gross Budgetary Support from Ministry of Finance & internal generation. In view of the uncertainty with regard to funding, no timeframe for completion of projects can be fixed. Therefore, magnitude of cost overruns cannot be quantified.

To expedite completion of projects, Railways have arranged additional funds by way of loan from LIC for funding throughput enhancement projects and regular coordination meetings are held with Ministries/Department/State Government Authorities to expedite above-mentioned clearances. Other measures taken to expedite completion are prioritization of projects, delegation of powers at field level, inviting the State Governments to participate with Railways for resource mobilization for projects, nomination of nodal officers for improved co-ordination with the State Governments etc.

Digitalization of Railways

3486. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are problems in digitalizing the Railways, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether waiver of service charges on purchase of railway tickets, digitally, would have an additional burden of ₹500 crore on Railways, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of steps the Ministry has taken to make Railways fully cashless and the timeline and details of additional financial burden which the Ministry will incur after this?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) to (c) In order to help passengers and incentivize the payment through digital modes for booking of reserved tickets, service charge on online booking of tickets has been withdrawn for the tickets booked from 23.11.2016 to 31.03.2017. Approximately, an amount of ₹184 crore has not been realized from passengers on account of service charge and service tax thereon on reserved tickets booked online from 23.11.2016 to 28.02.2017.

With a view to promoting cashless transaction on Indian Railways, various initiatives have been taken including the following:

- (i) The facility of online booking of reserved ticket has been provided through Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) website. The payment for tickets booked through IRCTC website is made through various cashless modes such as net banking, through credit/debit cards, cash cards and e-wallets. Further, to incentivize cashless transaction, service charge on online booking of tickets has been withdrawn for the tickets booked from 23.11.2016 to 31.03.2017.
- (ii) The facility of booking unreserved ticket including journey, season and platform tickets through mobile phone has been introduced in all suburban sections of Central, Western, Southern, Eastern, South Central, South Eastern and Delhi-Palwal section of Northern Railway. Additional payment options under the digital modes have also been introduced to widen the scope of digital payments for purchase of unreserved tickets.
- (iii) The facility of renewal of season tickets through IRCTC website has been provided for suburban train services on Western and Central Railways wherein payment is made through electronic mode.
- (iv) It has been decided to install 10,000 Point of Sale (POS) machines in association with State Bank of India at various locations of Indian Railways *i.e.* PRS locations, UTS locations, Parcel/Goods locations. At present, more than 4100 POS machines have been installed over the Zonal Railways.
- (v) An advanced Beta version of the mobile application for booking of reserved tickets has also been launched by IRCTC giving additional options of cashless payment.
- (vi) Service charge applicable on transactions against credit/debit cards for purchasing journey tickets at Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS)/Passenger Reservation System (PRS) counters has been withdrawn.
- (vii) Online booking facility for accredited press correspondents on the basis of registered ID card has been launched.
- (viii) International Credit/Debit cards issued outside India are accepted for booking of e-tickets through IRCTC website.

- (ix) Free accidental insurance cover of upto ₹ 10 lakh for confirmed/RAC passengers in case of tickets booked online from 10.12.2016 to 31.03.2017.
- (x) Provision of 0.5% discount on season tickets purchased through digital means with effect from 01.01.2017.
- (xi) Provision of 5% discount on payment made online for availing services like online booking of retiring rooms with effect from 01.01.2017.
- (xii) Catering stalls have also been instructed to provide options for making cashless payments.

As regards problems in digitalization, the issues noticed during implementation of the schemes are resolved appropriately based on the feedback. Since the initiatives to promote cashless transactions are in the evolving stage, it is not feasible to arrive at the total financial implication on this account. However, based on the service charge collected by IRCTC during the current Financial Year 2016-17 (upto 22nd November, 2016) and revenue foregone thereafter till 28.02.2017 and also likely growth of 5% in e-ticket booking in the next Financial Year, expected loss of revenue to IRCTC on account of non-collection of service charge in the next Financial Year may be approximately ₹ 600 crore if the service charge remains withdrawn.

Disinvestment of railway PSUs

3487. SHRI K. K. RAGESH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that three railway PSUs, viz., Indian Railway Construction Company Limited, Indian Railway Finance Corporation and Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation are set for disinvestment; and
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) Yes, Sir. In the Union Budget 2017-18, the Railway PSUs like Indian Railway Catering Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC), Indian Railway Finance Corporation Limited (IRFC) and Iacon International Limited (IRCON) (formerly known as Indian Railway Construction Company Limited) have been identified for listing of shares in stock exchanges.

- (b) Listing of Public Sector Enterprises helps foster greater public accountability and unlock the true value of these companies.