

(b) whether there is any proposal/measure in place for abolishing the said scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) and (b) Occupancy of the trains varies during peak, non-peak, festivals seasons, special occasions and weekends etc. Therefore, in some of the months, the trains run with higher occupancy (more than the berth/seats potential) as compared to same period of previous years and sometimes during non-peak times some berths/seats remain vacant.

Only about 0.35% of the total passengers carried by Indian Railways are affected due to introduction of flexi fare system in Rajdhani, Shatabdi and Duronto trains. There is mixed response from different quarters on the introduction of Flexi fare system. Based on the feedback received, an interim review of Flexi fare system has been made and the following changes have been made:

- (i) 10% rebate in basic fare on vacant berths/seats after preparation of first chart in Rajdhani, Shatabdi and Duronto trains.
- (ii) Discounted fare has been offered for the passengers of Jaipur-Ajmer and Ajmer-Jaipur in 12015/12016 New Delhi-Ajmer Shatabdi Express and for the passengers of Bengaluru City-Mysuru and Mysuru-Bengaluru City in 12007/12008 Chennai Central-Mysuru Shatabdi Express. Further discounted fare has also been offered for the passengers of New Jalpaiguri-Malda Town in 12042 New Jalpaiguri Shatabdi Express.
- (iii) Provision of Tatkal quota has been reduced in flexi fare trains from maximum 30% to 10% of the total berths availability.

Further, a Committee consisting of two Railway Members and four non-Railway Members has been constituted on 11.12.2017 to examine all options and recommend best option keeping in mind passengers and Railways interest.

Agreement with Japan for Bullet Train Project

†153. SHRI NARESH AGRAWAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has entered into a costly agreement with Japan to complete the Bullet train project in the country whereas China is working on a Bullet train in Thailand at many times lesser cost, if so, the reasons therefor; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if not, the basis for entering into such a costly agreement with Japan without any tender?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) and (b) A Memorandum of Cooperation has been signed between Governments of India and Japan to implement Mumbai-Ahmedabad high speed rail corridor with technical and financial assistance of Government of Japan. Government of Japan has agreed to provide 81% of the project cost at a very concessional interest rate of 0.1% with repayment period of 50 years.

Besides Japanese Shinkansen's proven reputation for reliability and safety, the project is sanctioned on the premise of transfer of technology and Make in India.

Inter country comparisons of cost of high speed rail projects are not appropriate as projects vary in terms of speed/technical parameters (actual high speed of more than 250 kmph or semi-high speed of 160-200 kmph), period of execution, scale economies due to size of high speed network being implemented and other local/geographical conditions.

Cooperation with Japan and Japanese technology was selected because of safety record and concessional financing with technological support made available by Japan.

Intercity express from Ambikapur to Raipur

†154. SHRI RAM VICHAR NETAM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to start Intercity Express train from Ambikapur to Raipur in Chhattisgarh, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) by when the above train would be started for the convenience of passengers, if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) and (b) At present, there is no proposal for introduction of new train from Ambikapur to Raipur owing to operational and resource constraints. However, presently 18241/18242 Durg-Ambikapur Express-cum-passenger (daily) provides direct connectivity between Ambikapur and Raipur.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.