

Railways' fare may or may not be higher than the air fare depending upon the class of travel as well as the peak or lean periods. It is the choice of the passengers to opt either Railway or Airlines for travelling as per their convenience.

Further, alternative train services on normal fare structure are available over Indian Railways on the routes of Rajdhani trains. Railway also serves a large number of passengers boarding/de-boarding at intermediate stations.

Moreover, over long distance sectors like Mumbai-Kolkata and Chennai-New Delhi, trains take around 26 to 28 hours for travel on these sectors while the same journey is done in 1.5 to 3 hours by air.

(c) to (e) Passenger traffic over Indian Railways varies during peak, non-peak, festival seasons, special occasions and weekends etc. Therefore, sometimes the trains run with higher occupancy (more than the berth potential) and sometimes during non-peak periods, some berths remain vacant. The per centage actual earnings during September, 2016 to August, 2018 (flexi period) in comparison to corresponding years (non flexi period) has increased by 17.32%. Further, the average occupancy of all reserved accommodation including Rajdhani trains has increased from 101.15% (2015-2016: Non-flexi period) to 105.80% (2017-18: Flexi period).

Cost overrun due to delayed railway projects

1437. DR. K. V. P. RAMACHANDRA RAO:

SHRI MAJEED MEMON:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that several railway projects are facing cost overrun due to delay in execution, if so, the details thereof;

(b) the major projects which are in execution by Railways and their estimated cost overrun; and

(c) the reasons for the cost overrun and in what manner the Ministry is planning to reduce these cost overruns in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) to (c) At present, 503 Railway projects including 183 New Lines, 57 Gauge Conversion and 263 Doubling Projects are in different stages of execution/ planning/sanction. The completion of Railway projects requires acquisition of land, shifting of utilities, various statutory clearances etc. leading to time and cost overrun. However, Railway is holding regular meetings with State Government and concerned Central Government officials on various issues for timely completion of the projects.

For important projects, capacity enhancement projects, last mile connectivity etc., institutional financing has been done by arranging loan from M/s Life Insurance Corporation of India Limited for ₹ 1.5 lakh crore, which has increased Railways' capacity for committed fund provision for essential projects.

Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh

1438. SARDAR SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh was created in 2017-18 for safety works;
- (b) if so, the amount earmarked for the purpose; and
- (c) the amount spent so far and safety measures undertaken especially in Punjab?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) Yes, Sir. 'Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh' has been introduced in 2017-18 for safety works relating renewal, replacement, upgradation of critical safety assets under Capital segment of Budget.

(b) The fund has a corpus of ₹ 1 lakh crore over a period of five years, with an annual outlay of ₹ 20,000 crore.

(c) In 2017-18, expenditure of ₹ 16091 crore has been incurred from 'Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh. The Fund under 'Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh' is utilized to finance works under plan heads Traffic Facilities, Rolling Stock, Level Crossings, Road Over Bridges/Road Under Bridges, Track Renewal, Bridge Works, Signal and Telecommunication Works, other Electrical Works, Traction Distribution Works, Machinery and Plant, Workshop, Passenger Amenities and Training/Human Resource Development. Safety measures undertaken by Indian Railways are not maintained State-wise.

MPLADS funds for Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana

†1439. SHRI AJAY PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is considering to provide additional funds in MPLADS for Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana; and
- (b) if not, the reasons therefor?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.