

Convenience fee on E-tickets

758. SHRI PRABHAKAR REDDY VEMIREDDY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the convenience fee on e-tickets withdrawn by IRCTC is going to be reintroduced again with GST;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is not contradictory that on the one hand Ministry wants to push digital payments and on the other hand it is putting hurdles in the form of convenience fee etc., which restricts online bookings; and

(d) if so, would the Ministry reconsider its decision of introducing convenience fee one-tickets?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL): (a) and (b) Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) levies service charge as per market conditions since the introduction of online ticketing facility over Indian Railways in 2002. In order to incentivize digital payments, the aforesaid service charges were temporarily withdrawn in November, 2016.

However, IRCTC incurs substantial expenditure on providing online ticketing facility. Further, many initiatives like Alternate Train Accommodation Scheme 'VIKALP', Artificial Intelligence based Passenger Name Record (PNR) confirmation predictor etc. have been introduced on the IRCTC website to enhance passenger convenience and user-experience. In order to defray the cost incurred in maintenance, upgradation and expansion of ticketing infrastructure, a convenience fee of ₹ 15/- + GST per ticket for Non-AC Classes and ₹ 30/- + GST per ticket for AC Classes is being levied by IRCTC *w.e.f.* 01.09.2019.

(c) The online ticket booking facility provided by IRCTC is one of the most passenger friendly initiative of Indian Railways. Even after the levying of the convenience fee, online ticketing through IRCTC has continued its upward trend and it presently constitutes about 72% of total reserved tickets booked on Indian Railways.

(d) At present, there is no proposal to reconsider the decision of introducing convenience fee on e-tickets.