

श्री उपसभापति: आप सवाल पूछिए।

श्री वीर सिंह: क्या इस ओर भी आपने कोई ऐसी कानून-व्यवस्था बनाई है, जिससे किसानों को इसका लाभ पहुँच सके?

श्री परशोत्तम रुपाला: माननीय उपसभापति महोदय, जिस प्रकार से किसानों की फसल की क्षति हो जाती है, कुदरती आपदा वगैरह के जो issues हैं, उसमें जो अपना अभी का तंत्र है, उसमें राज्य सरकार की ओर से दरखास्त आने के बाद वहाँ केन्द्र की टीम का जाना होता है और आकलन होने के बाद हमारा विभाग उसका recommendation कर देता है, फिर गृह विभाग की ओर से जो राशि अनुमोदित होती है, वह राज्य सरकारों को दी जाती है और राज्य सरकारों के माध्यम से किसानों को दी जाती है। जहाँ तक इस योजना का सम्बन्ध है, इसमें कहीं से भी आज तक ऐसी कोई सूचना हमारे पास नहीं आई है कि केन्द्र से गई हुई राशि वहाँ किसानों तक नहीं पहुँची है।

श्री उपसभापति: प्रश्न संख्या 66.

Increase in railway fares

*66. SHRI VAIKO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government increased railway fares in the name of rationalization which is causing hardship to the millions of passengers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether providing any relief in fare is being considered for the passengers travelling in the non-AC trains and in long distance trains;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reason for the increased passenger fare in all classes of trains?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL): (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) Recently, Indian Railway has rationalized the passenger fare with effect from 01.01.2020. In this rationalization, there is no increase in suburban fare (both in second class and first class). However, in case of non-suburban (Ordinary), a nominal increase of 01 paisa per kilometre has been done. Moreover, in case of non AC classes

and AC classes in Mail Express trains, fare has been increased by 02 paisa per kilometre and 04 paisa per kilometre respectively.

(c) and (d) With an aim to recover a small part of losses being incurred in coaching services, it has been decided to rationalize the passenger fares with effect from 01.01.2020. However, there is no increase in suburban fare. This passenger segment which comprises around 66% of Total number of passengers has been kept out of the purview of this revision, thus there is no impact on daily commuters. However, the input costs have multiplied over the years, causing considerable losses in coaching segment. The recent fare increase in the non-AC and AC (including long distance trains) classes is extremely nominal and will bridge the gap between costs and revenue to a small extent only.

(e) The overall losses incurred on coaching services have risen significantly. This is because of mounting costs in coaching segment, without any increase in revenues. Prior to this fare rationalisation, the last fare revision was effected in 2014-15 with effect from 25.06.2014. Since then, there was no increase in passenger fare despite increase in input cost over the years, until 01.01.2020.

SHRI VAIKO: Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, on the New Year's day, people were shocked by an announcement of this Government about the hike in railway fares in all the classes, including sleeper class, non-AC trains. The justification given by the Railway Minister is to use the revenue for modernization of network, modernization of coaches and improved facilities over stations. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Put your question, please. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI VAIKO: Sir, I am coming to the question. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, you are taking too much time. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI VAIKO: I would like to know what types of coaches you are providing to the South-bound trains, like, Tamil Nadu Express, the GT Express, the Kerala Express, the Karnataka Express, etc. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please be brief. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI VAIKO: I would like to know from the hon. Minister, just like he left out the hike in suburban passengers, keeping in view the affordability concerns of the commuters, whether he will consider sparing the passengers who are travelling in second class

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non-AC, in view of the fact that they cannot afford increased fares. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please be brief, otherwise I will have to move to the next one. ...(*Interruptions*)... Mr. Vaiko, please be brief otherwise I will move to the next one. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI VAIKO: Because they are daily wagers, agriculturists, handloom weavers and labourers. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No; no, this is not the way. This is not the occasion to make a speech. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI VAIKO: I would like to know whether he will roll back the fare in the case of second-class tickets and sleeper class. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: This is not the way. I will not give an opportunity for the second supplementary. ...(*Interruptions*)... This is not an occasion to make a speech. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL: Hon. Deputy Chairman, Sir, the Indian Railways is continuously upgrading its services, and facilities that it provides to the people. I am sure that in the last five to five and a half years all the hon. Members would have felt or experienced that significant improvement in the level of services, in punctuality, cleanliness of stations, safety track record, replacement of old and worn-out equipments by the Railways. All these measures, have resulted in improvement in operations and passenger services. Obviously, this is a huge cost element involved in it. I would like to inform the hon. Members, many of them might even be aware, that currently we are losing about ₹ 55,000 crores as against ₹8,000 crore in 2004 on passenger services provided throughout the country. However, fare increase is a very sensitive subject. Last time, a key nominal was done in June, 2014. Costs keep going up. In fact, after the Seventh Pay Commission, the costs have drastically gone up. Therefore, a very, very nominal increase has been done, I am sure people will appreciate — one paisa per kilometre, for the ordinary class; two paisa per kilometre for the mail and express trains; and four paisa per kilometre for the air conditioned trains. I think, it is a very miniscule increase. Considering the losses of ₹ 55,000 crores, this will barely, I repeat barely, compensate five per cent of ₹ 55,000 crores, over the whole year. So, this is just a very small step, a drop in the ocean, towards making the Railways self-sufficient.

Otherwise, it will be impossible to improve or provide the services that all of us require.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Vaiko, you are such a senior Member. You know that this is not the occasion for a speech. I am allowing you again. Please be brief while asking a question.

SHRI VAIKO: Sir, I was asking. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No; you were making a speech. So, please be brief. ...*(Interruptions)*... Other Members should also get an opportunity to ask their questions.

SHRI VAIKO: Only one question, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Should I move on to another Member?

SHRI VAIKO: The railways were losing from ₹10 crores to ₹15 crores per month in the e-ticketing scam, which was unearthed recently. Taking advantage of the security loopholes in the IRCTC login portal, illegal software programmes were developed and parallel ticketing was going on. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether any action is taken to make the system foolproof and tamper-proof so that this kind of a scam does not take place.

SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL: Sir, Mr. Vaiko has raised a very good question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, it is a very good question.

SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL: I am grateful to the hon. Member for bringing this to the attention of all the hon. Members, through the Chair. Technology keeps getting upgraded. The IRCTC along with CRIS, which is our arm, which does the technology upgradation, is continuously monitoring and making an effort to bring firewalls into the system and improvise the system. But there are two aspects to it. Firstly, worldwide, the hackers or the people who are able to create algorithms and break the firewalls, usually, are always one step ahead. You create a firewall; they come up with another alternative. I would have hoped it would be razed to the top, but, unfortunately, technology, sometimes, you are razing to the bottom where you are not able to keep track with the way the innovative hackers are able to break technology. But, I can assure him that we are continuously on the job. We are working to ensure that this does not happen. After the integration of all the services, due to the synergy that was done between the different Departments,— the traffic department and other departments working as a

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team, working as a family — we were able to unearth this scam. Stringent action will be taken against all the wrongdoers.

PROF. MANOJ KUMAR JHA (Bihar): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, through you, I would like to ask the hon. Minister of Railways: Are you contemplating, what the Cabinet note suggests, merger of different Services or cadres? And, if you are on the ground of fighting departmentalism, don't you think that in order to treat a disease, you are, actually, creating an epidemic which is against the natural law justice?

SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL: Sir, this is not a related question, but I will be very happy to answer because, I think, many Members may have some concerns which are absolutely unfounded. To begin with, I would like to mention that the Railway Board and these various Departments are a legacy which is more than 100 years old. The world has moved on. New technologies, new management principles and newer and more efficient ways of doing work have been introduced all over the world. While every company, every organisation, has departments— but the Indian Railways is the only section which has split their organisation into eight departments. All of them work as verticals, as silos, without any inter-relation with each other in terms of working as one group for a common cause. This departmentalism has gone to that extent! If I may give an example, if there was an accident, then, earlier, there used to be a fight who was responsible for the accident. Now, very often, — it may not be entirely correct — but I am told by various people that it is shared, that, okay, this accident is related to one department, the other thing is to another and so on, so that nobody really gets a flag for any of the inefficiency. I hope this is not true, but we are finding various ways. Departmentalism has been the bane of efficiency in the organisation. I had several rounds of discussions over two-and-a-half years, and, finally, in December, during the interaction with over a thousand officials, we discussed this at great length, small groups worked on it, and almost unanimously, (while obviously nothing can be 100 per cent unanimous) everybody felt that it will be in the interest of Railways to make it one strong organisation. All precaution and care is being taken to ensure that this does not cause any other problem. I can assure the Member through you, Sir, we are conscious of it. The Committee of Secretaries and a Group of Ministers will address any concern that any official may have. We will ensure that everybody's interests are fully protected.

SHRI T.K. RANGARAJAN (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I would like to know from the Minister why Railways is not able to compete with the sea route and road route. Road

traffic is very heavy and people prefer road. People prefer sea route; from Kolkata to Chennai, Kolkata to Thoothukudi. Why Railways is not able to compete with them?

SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL: Sir, obviously, as far as sea routes are concerned, there is no question. That any mode of transport can compete with that. The ships can travel on different paths and there is no restriction on the number of paths, whereas, in Railway you need to start right from land acquisition, invest hundreds and thousands of crores of rupees, set up tracks and then tracks also become a restriction that how many trains you can run on the tracks.

As regards investment between Railways and roadways, obviously, the roads require much less investment. There is signalling system in the Railways for example which you don't need so elaborate in the roads. You don't need expensive railway tracks for roads. You don't need a large amount of maintenance infrastructure in roads compared to the Railways. So, it is like comparing an apple and an orange. The roads have their own importance and have completely different investment structure and operating cost. Railways is a much, much larger investment. But in terms of operating cost, Railways is more efficient because once you get a path, then the requirement of energy is much less and you can move larger volumes. So, it is a trade-off. For shorter distances, usually road is a better method; for medium term distances, rail is better; and for long distances, ship is better.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Question No. 67. Questioner is not present.
...(Interruptions)...

एक माननीय सदस्य: सर, वे उपस्थित हैं। ... (व्यवधान)...

श्री उपसभापति: डा. विकास महात्मे, आप अपनी सीट पर तो रहें।

Stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana

*67. DR. VIKAS MAHATME: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the detrimental effects of the practice of stubble burning by farmers in North India, if so, the steps that have been taken in this regard;