

wagons. So, we have floated a scheme "Own your own Wagon". In this scheme, even though proper advertisement and everything is made, hardly three parties came forward. One is Tata Tea Ltd. Another is M/s Essar Gujarat Ltd. and the third one is Indian Oil Corporation. These three offer themselves to build their own wagons. Tata Tea want we rake and also specially constructed double decker. For design, it has been sent to RDSO. Essar Gujarat want three rakes. This has been finalised and a decision has been taken at the Board level and communication has been made. So far as the Indian Oil Corporation is concerned, it is under process.

SHRI ANNA JOSHI: This is the question on privatisation of projects and services of Railways.

May I ask through you, whether the Railways have decided to privatise the catering service on Railways and if it is so, how far it is done. In how much time, it will be completed.

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: Privatisation of catering has been a factor which has been agonising all sections for a long time. It has been decided that all existing departmental units shall not be privatised but in future that will be thought over.

Late Running of Trains

*102. MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) BHUWAN
CHANDRA KHANDURI:
SHRI KHELAN RAM JANGDE:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of express, mail and superfast trains do not maintain punctuality;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Railways have laid down any norms to categories a train punctual or otherwise for the purpose of collecting statistical data;

(d) whether any provisions has been made to refund fare and provide other facilities like meals/snacks etc. in case of inordinate delay in running of a train;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the steps being taken to maintain punctuality of trains?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI
MALLIKARJUN): (a) to (f). A statement is
laid on the table of the Sabha.

STATEMENT

(a) Punctuality of Express, Mail and Superfast trains has been averaging between 82.0% and 85.1% since April 1992.

(b) Punctuality has not been satisfactory mainly on account of factors beyond the control of Railways like agitations, bandhs, alarm chain pulling by miscreants. Foggy weather and accidents.

(c) Mail/Express trains reaching destination upto 15 minutes late are taken as on time for statistical purposes.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

(f) Running of trains is being closely monitored to eliminate detentions which are within the control of Railways. Coordination with State Civil and Police authorities is regularly being maintained to eliminate detentions on account of agitations, bandhs and miscreants' activities including alarm chain pulling etc.

[Translation]

MAJ. GENERAL (RETD.) BHUWAN CHANDRA KHANDURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in his reply the hon. Minister has said that a Mail Express train reaching its destination upto 15 minutes late is taken as on time but perhaps, he does not know that the Railway Board has adopted a very good method to give a very large cushion of Time by giving some margin for foggy weather etc. I quote two examples in this regard. In case of trains running between Howrah and Delhi, the train while coming from Howrah takes two hours to cover a distance of 126 Kilometres between Aligarh and Delhi in 2 hrs. time. But while going to Howrah from Delhi it takes 1 hour and 25 minutes, which shows that an extra cushion of 25 minutes is given to it. Likewise, A.C. Express from New Delhi to Aligarh, takes 1 hour and 50 minutes but when it comes from Aligarh to Delhi it takes 2 hrs and 19 minutes. It means half an hour extra time is given. These figures are given in the Railway time-table. In another case when a train goes from Delhi to Dehradun then it takes a time of 2 hrs and 3 minutes from Haridwar to Dehradun for a distance of 51 kilometres and while coming from Dehradun to Haridwar it takes 1 hour and 22 minutes. It means, the Board has given 41 minutes extra time for a distance of 51 kilometers. Likewise for another train the extra time is 56 minutes and for another one it is 50 minutes. (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Now you have to ask the question.

MAJ GEN. (RETD.) BHUWAN CHANDRA KHANDURI: I was only explaining because otherwise he will not give a direct answer.

I want to know from the Railway Minister whether it is a policy to give cushion at the

tag end of the trains running time so that you can cover up late running of the train. If it is so, why it has been done?

If it is not so, will you please assure us that next time when you frame the Railway time-table, this anomaly will be removed?

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: As the august House is aware, introduction of a large number of trains- Mail, Express and Super-fast- naturally created problem at the reception and also while departing. In the morning if we see large number of trains behind within five-minute gap, within 10-minutes gap will be arriving. So, the space on the platform is very limited. But still we have to receive. For example, Delhi received not less than 135-140 trains. The question which has been put is not deliberate. It is a fact from operational point of view.

[Translation]

MAJ. GENERAL (RETD.) BHUWAN CHANDRA KHANDURI: Hon. Minister, Sir, this is not an answer that it is not a problem then as only one-two trains are for Dehradun.

[English]

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: if the hon. Member is so specific about it, I will ask the Ministry to look into this.

[Translation]

MAJ. GENERAL (RETD.) BHUWAN CHANDRA KHANDURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, probably you are also feeling that this is not a proper reply. The reply given by the hon. Minister is not satisfactory. My second supplementary is about accountability.

[English]

Is there any method of warding punishment for causing undue delay because of

the failure of the railway?

[*Translation*]

Sir, the hon Minister has said in reply that there are a number of other reasons for which Railways do not take responsibility, but in those cases where the Railway is responsible; was there any system in vogue in Railways in 1986 for awarding punishment and the second part of my question is Why cannot the railways have some method of saying sorry to the passengers? Even if a token system is introduced whereby the passengers are conveyed regrets when the trains are unduly late, I am sure it will bring about credibility of the railways.

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: This suggestion, of course, can be observed, but how is it possible to say regrets from morning till evening to every passenger? (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ANIL BASU: The Railway Minister admits that the trains are late.

MR. SPEAKER: If the trains are late from morning to evening, do not say that. If that trains are late once in a while, you say that!

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: I welcome your suggestion.

MR. SPEAKER: It is all right. You replied. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

SHRI KHELAN RAM JANGDE (Vilaspur): In his reply to the question the hon. Minister has provided the data upto April. Will the Minister give the data for the whole year? The trains always run late during rainy season. All the Mail/Express trains are running late. The chain pulling also causes late running of trains. I would like to know from, the hon. Minister as to

what steps are being taken by the Government in this regard.

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: The punctuality is certainly affected. I have already given the main reasons in the statement. There are certain reasons which are beyond the control of the railways and there are also certain reasons which are within the control of the railways. The reasons beyond the control of the railways have gone up to 47 per cent. However, we will take note of this and we have a regular monitoring cell in our Railway Board for 24 hours and every day at zonal level, General Manager has to take a meeting on punctuality of the previous day's trains running along with the Heads of the Department and to see how best the trains can reach the destination on time.

SHRI SOBHANDREESWARA RAO VADDE: I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware of the fact that almost all trains coming from Eisakapatnam side are running late because of the poor condition of the track between Rajahmundry and Vijayawada. Will the Ministry take necessary steps to strengthen the track conditions so that this late running of trains is eliminated. I would like to know from the hon. Minister, since the electrification has already been completed from New Delhi to Madras, will the cushion time be reduced and will the running time of the Tamil Nadu Express and G.T. Express be reduced to help the passengers.

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: After having taken various facts into consideration, the time-table has been framed. So, I feel it will be difficult to reduce the running times of the prestigious trains in spite of electrification.

So far as the late running of trains between Visakhapatnam and Vijayawada is concerned, the track condition, wherever it needs rehabilitation, we are doing and certainly in some of these areas from

Balharshah to Vijayawada or from that end.

SHRI SOBHANDREESWARA RAO VADDE: So many accidents have taken place. Because of certain engineering works also, sometimes the speed to be reduced. That is how it affects the punctuality.

[*Translation*]

SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Chhatisgarh Express running between Bilaspur and Amritsar generally reaches Delhi late by one and a half hour on 5-6 days in a week. Similarly the return train also reaches there late. I would like to know from the hon. Minister the criteria fixed for determining the trains running late whether it is one and a half hours or more than this? This train is generally late by 15-20 minutes. Earlier the late even after electrification of the track and hauling by lactic engines. This train taken 28 hours to reach Bilaspur while other train just takes 21 hours. So, there is the time difference of 7 hours. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he will take special interest in saving time of running of this train? It is my observation that in the Chhatisgarh region people are generally poor and they do not raise hue and cry. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Chhatisgarh region will continue to be neglected or will he take some steps in this direction?

[*English*]

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: I appreciate the feelings of the hon. Member. I take note of it. We will see how best we can improve the punctuality of the trains.

[*Translation*]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the relationship between the railways and the passengers is one-sided. Perhaps, there may be hardly a business concern in

the world in which relation between buyer and seller is not two-sided. The Railways is the only concern in India which is least accountable, no matter however the passenger is worried. He has said that trains run late due to pulling of alarm chain. But, in my constituency I have seen that alarm chains are not fitted in the trains. As a result, when Shri George Fernandes was the Minister in charge, during the Ninth Lok Sabha, a train in my constituency caught fire and 50-60 passengers burnt to death. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether this system of alarm chain will be introduced. He says that trains run late because of the pulling of alarm chains. I would like to submit that the trains reaching Patn are also generally late.

Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to a fact normally noticed by us at the platforms, that announcements are made that the trains are arriving in time even after the schedule time of arrival is well past the clock. It is our experience.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: I am pulling the chain.

[*Translation*]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: This we have noticed at Patna, Ranchi, Jamshedpur and Delhi, where announcements continue to be made that trains are arriving in time even after the schedule time of arrival is well past the clock. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether steps will be taken for ensuring the punctuality of the trains and maintenance of performance record and the enquiry system strengthened, and whether alarm chain will be fitted in the trains running within the periphery of 100 kms. of Patna?

[English]

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: This incident of alarm chain pulling is alarmingly increasing. If you take it into consideration, in 1985, there were only one lakh and odd incidents of alarm chain pulling. In 1991 there were 3, 27, 058 cases of alarm chain pulling. The hon. Member Shri Nitish Kumar comes from Bihar. In 1991 there were 64, 057 cases of alarm chain pulling. You may feel that there is no alarm chain pulling in the just reason. I do not think so. We have to see it as part of the system. In spite of the miscreants involving in this activity, as a system as a whole we have to keep it in mind. We will keep it.

So far as measures of pauchtality and performance maintenance are concerned, we are taking adequate measures.

SHRI RAM KAPSE: It is our general experience that during summer, trains are late. It is generally observed that shortage of drinking water at difference stations is the real reasons for delay. I would like to ask the Minister whether any study has been undertaken about the shortage of water and its relation to the delay. I would also like to ask the Minister whether he would like to correct the reply given by him. You have mentioned that the accident is the reason which is out of your control, that is, the railways control. I cannot imagine this. If you are not responsible for the accident, then for what are the railways responsible? Would you like to correct the reply given in part (b)?

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: Sir, so far as the first part of the question is concerned, that is, about the drinking water, it is true that sometimes passengers get annoyed and they do not allow trains to move further. Drinking water is not available and sometimes the fans and other electrical fittings are wrong. But it does not regularly happen in every train or in the delayed trains. It does

happen now and then in some trains. Therefore, the administration has taken adequate note of the lack of the drinking water particularly in summer. There are certain stations where sometimes there is no proper availability of water even. In such conditions, railways take the required measures to bring the water also from a far off place.

So far as part B of the question is concerned, correction is not needed because what happens is if an accident takes place, all the trains following it automatically have to be detained or they have to be diverted to reach their destinations. That is how it affects. (Interruptions)

SHRI RAM KAPSE: Who is responsible for accidents?

[Translation]

Cane Price Arrears

*103. SHRI KAMAL BHOGENDR
JHA:
SHRI KAMAL CHAUDHRY:

Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) the sugarcane price paid to the farmers by the sugar mills in the Public cooperative and private sectors in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Maharashtra, Orissa and Tamil Nadu, respectively during 1992-93;

(b) the latest estimates of dues payable to the sugarcane growers by sugar mills as on date, State-wise; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to ensure timely payment of such dues to the cane growers?