

**Title: Regarding restoration of concession of fare to Senior Citizens in the Railways.-
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DR. SHASHI THAROOR (THIRUVANANTHAPURAM): I wish to draw the attention of the Honourable Minister of Railways towards the urgent need to restore the railway fare concessions for Senior Citizens, which were withdrawn in March 2020, to prevent non-essential travelling during Covid-19. While most of the pandemic-related restrictions have eased with passenger traffic reaching normalcy, the concessions are yet to be restored. This is causing considerable hardships to millions of elderly passengers. It is disappointing that an essential welfare facility for Senior Citizens has been cited as 'loss of revenue' to the Railways. In August, 2022, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways, also recommended urgent restoration of such concessions in atleast the Sleeper and Third AC Classes but unfortunately, no meaningful action has been taken. Nearly 7 crore Senior Citizens travel by Railways every year and 35 crore Senior Citizen availed the concessions between 2017 and 2020. Revenue forgone averaged Rs. 1500 crores/year, which is less than 1% of its annual revenue. The loss is marginal and given the fresh capital infusion into the railways, the same may be mitigated by other means. I, therefore, urge the Hon? ble Minister of Railways to reconsider and restore the fare concessions to Senior Citizen so that the needy Senior Citizens, already affected by sky-rocketing inflation could avail this facility.