

Regarding increase in the number of unreserved and sleeper coaches in passenger trains passing through Thiruvananthapuram Railway Division-laid

DR. SHASHI THAROOR (THIRUVANANTHAPURAM): I wish to draw the attention of the Honourable Minister of Railways towards the recent media reports regarding the Indian Railways introducing AC train coaches by replacing either Sleeper or Second-Class coaches. With relatively smaller share of people being able to afford the higher costs of AC coaches; general ticket holders invading reserved compartments has become common. Many of my constituents have raised demand to increase the number of unreserved and sleeper coaches on various trains passing through Thiruvananthapuram Railway division. According to the Annual Statistical Statements of the Indian Railways, of all passengers carried by Indian Railways in 2019-20, 7.8% were in AC coaches, a sharp jump from 3.6% a decade back. Media reports claim an 80 paise difference per passenger per km between AC 3-tier coaches and reserved Sleeper Class in 2019-20. The fare of AC 3-tier has increased by 33 paise per passenger per km in the past decade, while that of reserved Sleeper Class increased only by 17.4 paise. Given that these concerns impede the ease of travel and convenience of many commuters, I would be grateful if the Government could kindly examine this issue urgently and increase the number of unreserved and sleeper coaches on passenger trains.