

## **Regarding need to restore concessions on Railway Tickets for senior citizens and accredited journalists-Laid**

**SHRI KIRTI AZAD (BARDHAMAN-DURGAPUR):** Before the Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020, Indian Railways extended concessional fares to senior citizens and Government-accredited journalists. Senior citizens in the category of males and transgender individuals were entitled to a 40% concession and 50% for females senior citizens. Accredited journalists enjoyed a 50% concession, which was further extended twice a year to their spouse/companions and children up to 18 years of age. These concessions were a vital measure to support affordable travel and acknowledge the invaluable contributions of senior citizens and journalists to the society. However, despite the resumption of train services in June 2022, these concessions have not been reinstated. According to an RTI response Railways earned 22,242 crore from approximately 15 crore senior citizens in 2022-23, highlighting the financial burden on this segment. With life returning to normal, it is crucial to restore these benefits. Senior citizens, often dependent on fixed incomes or pensions, require affordable transportation to maintain their dignity and mobility. Similarly, journalists, as key defenders of democracy, deserve support for their relentless efforts in disseminating information and holding institutions accountable. I urge the Ministry of Railways to prioritize equity and social justice by reinstating these concessions, reaffirming the Government's commitment to its most deserving citizens.