

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RAILWAYS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3112

ANSWERED ON:18.12.2008

FIRE IN AZADI EXPRESS

Patel Shri Kishanbhai Vestabhai; Sai Shri Nand Kumar; Singh Shri Sugrib

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Azadi Express caught fire in the recent past while in a stationary position;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of the valuable documents lost in the incident;
- (d) whether the Railways have made any investigation into the incident;
- (e) if so, the findings of the investigation thereof; and
- (f) the steps taken by the Railways to check such incidents in future?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS(DR. R. VELU)

(a) to (f): A statement is attached.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (f) OF UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3112 BY SHRI SUGRIB SINGH, SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL & SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI TO BE ANSWERED IN LOK SABHA ON 18.12.2008 REGARDING FIRE IN AZADI EXPRESS.

(a) & (b): Yes, Sir. As per scheduled programme, exhibition of Azadi Express was closed for Public at 18.50 Hrs. of 24.03.2008 and was stabled on line No. 5 (Platform No. 4) of new Bongaigaon Railway Station under Rangiya Division of North East Frontier Railway. The express was scheduled to proceed to Dimapur at 13.10 hours of 25.03.2008. On 24.03.2008 at about 21.05 hours, on duty RPF staff / power van staff felt burning smell coming out from inside the coach No. 1077. Matter was informed immediately to all concerned including State fire brigade/local Police, Bongaigaon. The said coach was under lock & key from outside. Available RPF /GRP /Railway staff could not extinguish the fire. However, at about 21.30 hours of 24.03.2008 fire brigade arrived and extinguished the fire.

(c): Due to the fire incident in Azadi Express various type of exhibition material, Khadi Gramodyog Office Documents, Gandhi Smriti Books, Darshana Samittee and various type of equipment like Samsung LCD TV, DVD, AC, SOFA etc. were damaged.

(d) & (e): An enquiry Committee was nominated by DRM/Rangiya consisting of Sr.DME/Rangiya, DEE/Rangiya & DSC/RPF/Rangiya to enquire into the matter and the enquiry committee submitted its findings as under :

It appears that either escorting staff from M/S. N.K. Kapoor Pvt. Lts./Delhi or the DAVP staff or both have opened VIP lounge after 18.50 hrs and have stayed there. It also appears during their stay they have left match stick/candle/cigarette in lit up condition in the VIP room (perhaps inadvertently) which initiated the fire on the floor (carpet flooring) and spread towards sale counter as well as towards power car side.

The Directorate of Forensic Science, Assam was also requested to ascertain the cause of fire. Accordingly three member team from Forensic Science Laboratory, Assam headed by Dr. R.N. Khound, Dy. Director Instrumentation Division have visited, examined and ascertained that the cause of fire in the aforesaid coach No. 1077 of Azadi Express was due to electric short circuit.

(f):

1. Frequent drives are conducted against carrying of inflammable materials and dangerous goods in trains and cases are registered under section 164 of the Railways Act by the Railway Protection Force.

2. Regular checks are conducted against smoking in trains and cases are registered under section 167 of the Railways Act by the Railway Protection Force.

3. Railways are providing fire extinguishers under the charge of the Guard in the Rear Second-class Luggage Room and in Air

conditioned coaches for fire fighting in case of any incident.

4. Traveling public is being briefed/educated through Mega phones and public address system not to carry inflammable articles on trains.

5. Surprise checks are being conducted on the two-wheelers booked for transportation on trains and action is being taken if vehicles are found with petrol.

6. All train escorting staff as well as station duty staff are briefed to inform the nearest fire service station to meet eventuality, whenever fire incidents are reported on running trains.

7. Wide publicity is being given through print/electronic media against the danger of carrying inflammable articles/explosives in trains.