

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2551
TO BE ANSWERED ON 03.01.2018**

ASTHA CIRCUIT TRAINS

2551. SHRIMATI K. MARAGATHAM:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether for promoting religious tourism, the Railways has proposed to introduce Astha Circuit Trains and State Tirth Trains;**
- (b) if so, the details thereof;**
- (c) whether it is a fact that while the Astha Circuit Trains will be operated by the Railways at its own expense, the State Tirth Trains will be run on request from State Governments at their cost and if so, the details thereof; and**
- (d) whether IRCTC will offer value added services to make it an all inclusive tour package, the way the State Governments will bear the entire cost for the same and if so, the details thereof?**

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS

(SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN)

(a) and (b): Indian Railways is operating Astha Circuit Trains and State Special Trains for promotion of religious tourism across India. Astha Circuit Trains were announced in Rail Budget, 2016. Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC) inaugurated the trip of Astha Circuit Trains on 17.02.2017 for Guwahati covering Kolkata, Bhubaneshwar and Puri. So far 10 Astha

Circuit Trains are operated. IRCTC with collaboration of State Governments is operating State Special Trains for senior citizens (60 years and above) of the respective States. So far, State Special Trains were operated for the State of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Odisha, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh covering important pilgrim/religious destinations of India. Currently, State Special Trains are being operated for Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Rajasthan.

(c) and (d): Astha Circuit Trains and State Special Trains are operated by IRCTC. The cost of trip for Astha Circuit Trains is paid by passenger itself at D900/- + GST per passenger per day, whereas, the cost of trip for State Special Trains is borne by the respective State Government and the beneficiaries are selected by the respective State Governments. IRCTC provides all inclusive services to passengers during the tour of Astha Circuit Trains and State Special Trains. It includes rail and road transportation, accommodation (dharamshala/dormitory), sightseeing, meals, accidental insurance etc. In addition, as per the instruction of State Government, passengers of State Special Trains are also provided additional requirements like traveller's kit which includes cap, toothbrush & paste, hair oil, comb, shampoo etc. The entire cost of value added services is borne by concerned State Governments.
