

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS**

**LOK SABHA**

**STARRED QUESTION NO. 111  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 09.02.2022**

**COMPLIMENTARY TRAVEL IN LUXURY TRAINS**

**\*111. SHRI A.K.P. CHINRAJ:**

**Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether complimentary travel in luxury trains like Palace on Wheels, Royal Rajasthan, etc. are still operational after 2017;**
- (b) if so, the number of passengers who travelled under complimentary travel in luxury trains, viz. Palace on Wheels, Maharaja Express and Royal Rajasthan between 2017 to 2019;**
- (c) the guidelines under which complimentary berths are allotted in luxury trains;**
- (d) whether the rationale of providing complimentary berth in luxury trains is not achieved as these luxury trains never generated any profit;**
- (e) whether the Standing Committee on Railways has also made recommendation in this direction; and**
- (f) if so, the details thereof and reaction of the Government in this regard?**

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF RAILWAYS, COMMUNICATIONS AND  
ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)**

**(a) to (f): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.**

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**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (f) OF STARRED QUESTION NO. 111 BY SHRI A.K.P. CHINRAJ TO BE ANSWERED IN LOK SABHA ON 09.02.2022 REGARDING COMPLIMENTARY TRAVEL IN LUXURY TRAINS**

**(a) & (b) Yes, Sir. The number of passengers authorized by Railways to travel under complimentary travel in luxury trains viz Palace on Wheels, Maharajas' Express and Royal Rajasthan on Wheels for the period from 2017 to 2019 are as follows:**

<b>Type of Luxury Tourist train</b>	<b>Year (No of Passengers)</b>		
	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>Palace on Wheels</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Maharajas' Express</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Royal Rajasthan on Wheels</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>N.A *</b>	

**\* Royal Rajasthan on Wheels (RROW) ceased to operate after 2017.**

**(c) The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)/ Agreement between Railways and State Tourism Corporations (STC)/Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation Ltd. (IRCTC) contains the provision for authorizing complimentary travel on the Luxury tourist trains which has been made to allow intensive monitoring of services and give feedback of services/deficiencies to enable corrective action and maintain standards of the services. Authorizing complimentary travel is also a marketing tool for this tourism product. While State Tourism Corporations (STC's) / Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd. (IRCTC) are responsible for services and marketing of the product, Railways is responsible to ensure that the condition of track, rolling stock, facilities at the stations enroute are maintained to the satisfaction of the tourists. The powers for authorizing complimentary travel are exercised by the Ministry of Railways and STC/IRCTC who may nominate a maximum of 2 berths per trip each, subject to availability. No complimentary travel is allowed on fully chartered trips.**

**contd./2**

**(d): The luxury tourist trains are run in the interest of promotion of rail based tourism in India and to provide a safe, hassle-free and comfortable means of showcasing India to international tourists. Setting and maintaining quality and service standards at world class levels is an important aspect of running these trains and requires continuous monitoring and inspection. As such, it is required that experienced officials from diverse fields/specializations are enabled to inspect the train with a view to identifying the areas needing improvement or deficiencies requiring rectification, which cover a wide range of parameters which includes quality of ride, safety protocols etc. Therefore complimentary travel, is in effect a travel for inspection and quality assurance purposes which is important for maintaining quality standards for the train. While IRCTC/STCs carry out the range of marketing activities as a full fledged effort, the feedback from officials includes an understanding of passenger needs and preferences obtained through passenger interaction during the trip, which guides further product development. Feedback/suggestions and inputs of officers are taken also into consideration to formulate or revise policies and guidelines.**

**The rationale for providing complimentary travel for inspections is achieved as the trains have consistently met quality standards, which is evident from the international awards and recognition won by these trains. Maharajas' Express has won the World's Leading Luxury Train award at the World Travel Awards for 7 consecutive years from 2012 to 2018. Similarly, Palace on Wheels has won "Best in Asia" Luxury Train award, PATA Gold Award etc. As such the trains have brought applause for the country at international level and created awareness about India as an attractive tourism destination.**

**contd./3**

**(e) and (f) Yes, Sir. The Standing committee on Railways, in their 18th report of 2017-18, on Tourism Promotion and Pilgrimage Circuit had recommended vide Para 10 of the report that the Ministry discontinue the system of complimentary travel in luxury tourist trains in view of the low revenue generation and low passenger occupancy from these trains. In response thereof, the Ministry of Railways had submitted that the senior officers of Railways are permitted for complimentary travel primarily for inspection purpose while others are permitted for promotion purpose as a marketing tool. Further, the Standing Committee on Railways, in their 24th report of 2018-19, recommended that the Ministry frame stringent guidelines for issue of these complimentary tickets to prevent possible misuse of public money.**

**In response to the above, Ministry of Railways had submitted that inspections are part and parcel of Railway functioning and the products like Luxury Tourist Trains also require intensive monitoring, feedback of services/deficiencies and marketing. The inspections include interaction with passengers and their feedback is necessary for improving services for promotion of the product in the future. 'Complimentary travel' permission is the authority given to officials for conducting these inspections. After conducting inspection on these trains, officers submit their inspection reports that are examined and shortfalls/ suggestions indicated are taken care of on a regular basis. Further, it is emphasized that authority for inspection is issued subject to availability of vacancies. Guidelines for issuing authority for complimentary travel for inspection of the luxury trains are scrupulously followed.**

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