

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS  
LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1975  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 11.02.2026**

**DECREASED RIDERSHIP IN RAILWAYS**

**1975. SHRI RAHUL GANDHI:**

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware that ridership in the Railways has decreased over Thirteen per cent during the last ten years while the population has increased by approximately Ten per cent during the same period;**
- (b) whether it is a fact that fares have been increased significantly during the last ten years and if so, the details thereof;**
- (c) the total number of passenger coaches operational, their average daily deployment and the average daily occupancy, by category (AC, Sleeper and General etc.) during the last ten years, year-wise;**
- (d) whether the Government proposes to implement dynamic fares for all AC trains and if so, the details and the rationale/timelines thereof;**
- (e) the details of the reasons for not restoring senior citizen concessions that were discontinued during the Covid pandemic despite full normalisation of passenger services; and**
- (f) whether the Government believes that increased fares, reduced availability of non-AC coaches and reduced concessions has contributed to falling ridership and if so, the details thereof?**

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF RAILWAYS, INFORMATION & BROADCASTING AND  
ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

**(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)**

**(a) to (f): During last 11 years (2014-2025), unprecedented infrastructure creation/augmentation works have been carried out in all transport sectors in the country. Progress achieved during this period under the key infrastructure sectors are as under:**

<b>Infrastructure Sector</b>	<b>Progress since 2014</b>
<b>National Highways</b>	<b>About 58,232 km long National Highways/Expressways has been added in the National Highways/Expressways network.</b>
<b>Railways</b>	<b>About 35,000 kms new railway tracks have been added.</b>
<b>Airports</b>	<b>90 nos. operational airports have been added.</b>
<b>Metro</b>	<b>848 km length and 21 more cities have been added in the Metro network.</b>

**Therefore, modal distribution is also changing accordingly to the change in infrastructure growth.**

**The fares of Indian Railways are among the lowest in comparison to other countries in the world.**

**A comparison of the Indian Railway passenger fares (ordinary class) with the fares of the similar segment of services of the neighbouring countries is as under:**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Approx lowest fare per PKM</b>	<b>Comparison with India</b>
<b>India</b>	<b>~ ₹ 0.20</b>	
<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>~ ₹ 0.54</b>	<b>~ 2.5x higher</b>
<b>Bangladesh</b>	<b>~ ₹ 0.37</b>	<b>~ 1.5x higher</b>
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	<b>~ ₹ 0.5</b>	<b>~ 2.5x higher</b>

**Passenger fare in Vande Bharat (Semi High-speed train) when compared with the near similar segment of services in Chair Car (AC) for a journey of around 300-400 km is as under:**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Average approx fare per PKM</b>	<b>Comparison with India</b>
<b>India</b>	<b>~ ₹ 2.19</b>	
<b>China</b>	<b>~ ₹ 7</b>	<b>~ 3x higher</b>
<b>Japan</b>	<b>~ ₹ 20</b>	<b>~ 9x higher</b>
<b>France</b>	<b>~ ₹ 13</b>	<b>~ 6x higher</b>

***Note: Comparison of fares in above tables is based on information as available in public domain.***

**There is no plan to implement dynamic fares in Vande Bharat Chair Car or Vande Bharat Sleeper trains.**

**Indian Railways gave subsidy of Rs. 60,466 crore on passenger tickets in 2023-24. This amounts to concession of 45% on an average, to every person, travelling on Railways. In other words, if the cost of providing service is Rs. 100, then the price of ticket is Rs. 55 only. This subsidy is continuing for all passengers. Further, concessions beyond this subsidy amount are continuing for many categories like 4 categories of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjans), 11 categories of patients and 8 categories of students.**

#### **New design Trainsets:**

**Indian Railways is focused on providing affordable, good quality services to all sections of society. IR have developed and introduced the following trains:**

##### **1. Vande Bharat services (Chair Car):**

**Indian Railways, with a view to improve travel experience of the passengers, have introduced indigenously designed and manufactured Vande Bharat trains with modern coaches, advanced safety features and passenger amenities. These new Vande Bharat Trains (Chair Car) have following features:**

- (a) Fitted with KAVACH.**
- (b) Jerk Free Semi-Permanent couplers.**
- (c) Centrally controlled Automatic Plug Doors and Fully Sealed wider gangways.**
- (d) Emergency Alarm Push buttons and Talk Back Units on all Coaches.**
- (e) Improved fire safety – Aerosol based fire detection and suppression system in electrical cabinets and lavatories.**
- (f) Higher acceleration with design/operating speed of 180/160 KMPH.**
- (g) Driver-Guard communication with voice recording facility & Crash hardened memory.**
- (h) Air conditioning units with indigenously developed UV-C lampbased disinfection system.**
- (i) Better Ride Comfort.**
- (j) CCTVs in all Coaches.**
- (k) For Divyangjan passengers special lavatory in the driving coaches on each end.**

- (l) Coach condition monitoring System (CCMS) display with remote monitoring.**

**Presently, 164 Vande Bharat train services (Chair Car) are being operated on the Indian Railways network.**

## **2. Vande Bharat Sleeper Service:**

**To improve travel experience of the long journey passengers and set new benchmarks in terms of safe and comfortable journey, Vande Bharat Sleeper trains are provided with modern coaches having advanced safety features and passenger amenities like:**

- (a) Jerk-Free Semi permanent couplers and Anti Climbers**
- (b) Fitted with KAVACH.**
- (c) Higher acceleration with design/operating speed of 180/160 KMPH.**
- (d) Crashworthy Design of Car body complying with EN standards.**
- (e) Fire barrier doors at the end of each coach for compliance of fire safety standards.**
- (f) Improved fire safety – Aerosol based fire detection and suppression system in electrical cabinets and lavatories.**
- (g) Regenerative braking system for energy efficiency.**
- (h) Air conditioning units provided with indigenously developed UV-C lamp-based disinfection system for deactivating 99 % harmful bacteria from conditioned air to improve the hygiene standards inside the passenger area.**
- (i) Centrally controlled Automatic Plug Doors and Fully Sealed wider gangways.**
- (j) CCTVs in all coaches.**
- (k) Emergency talk-back unit for communication between Passenger and Train Manager/Loco Pilot in case of emergency.**
- (l) For Divyangjan passengers, special lavatory in the driving coaches on each end.**
- (m) Centralized Coach Monitoring System for better condition monitoring of passenger amenities such as Air conditioning, Saloon Lighting etc.**
- (n) Ergonomically designed ladder for ease of climbing on to upper berths.**

**Presently, 02 Vande Bharat Sleeper services are being operated on the Indian Railways network.**

### **3. Amrit Bharat service:**

**To provide affordable means of transportation to the low and middle income families, Indian Railways have introduced Amrit Bharat services that are fully non-AC modern trains. The present composition of Amrit Bharat consists of 11 General Class coaches, 8 Sleeper Class coaches, 01 Pantry car and 02 Luggage cum Divyangjan coaches.**

**Increased speed and enhanced safety standards are the hallmarks of these trains with following enhanced features and amenities:**

- (a) Better aesthetics of seat and berths with enhanced look & feel on the lines of Vande Bharat Sleeper.**
- (b) Jerk Free Semi-Automatic Couplers.**
- (c) Improved Crashworthiness in coaches by provision of crash tube.**
- (d) Provision of CCTV system in all coaches and Luggage room.**
- (e) Improved designs of toilets.**
- (f) Improved design of Ladder for ease of climbing on to the berth.**
- (g) Improved LED Light fitting & Charging Sockets.**
- (h) Provision of EP assisted braking system.**
- (i) Aerosol based fire suppression system in toilets and electrical cubicles.**
- (j) USB Type-A and Type-C mobile charging sockets.**
- (k) Emergency Talk Back system for two-way communication between Passenger and Guard/Train Manager.**
- (l) Non-AC pantry with enhanced heating capacity.**
- (m) Fully sealed gangways with quick release mechanism for easy attachment and detachment.**

**Presently, 54 Amrit Bharat Express services are being operated on the Indian Railways network.**

### **4. Nammo Bharat Rapid Rail service**

**Indian Railways have introduced Nammo Bharat Rapid Rail services. These services are aimed to enhance the travel experience to the suburban and regional commuters for short distance travel. The prominent features of Nammo Bharat Rapid Rail are as follows:**

- (a) Centrally controlled Double Leaf Automatic Sliding Doors.**
- (b) CCTVs for safety and passenger surveillance.**
- (c) Modular interior with Cushioned Seats and Sealed Flexible Gangway.**
- (d) Emergency Talk System.**
- (e) Continuous LED lighting with Energy Efficient Lighting system.**
- (f) FRP Modular Toilets with vacuum evacuation.**
- (g) Fully Air-Conditioned trains with Driver cab AC.**

**Presently, 4 Namo Bharat Rapid Rail services are in operation.**

### **Special trains**

**IR also operates Special train services during festivals, holidays, etc. to cater to the extra needs of passengers and supplement the accommodation available by regular services.**

**Accordingly, the number of Special trains operated across the Indian Railways network, to facilitate the passengers during Summer/winter vacations, festivals like Holi, Durga Puja, Diwali, Chhath, Christmas, Sabrimala, Id-ul-fitr etc. are as below:**

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. special train trips</b>
<b>2023-24</b>	<b>~40,500</b>
<b>2024-25</b>	<b>~85,400</b>

### **Non-AC coaches (General and sleeper coaches)**

**With a view to meet the demand of passengers travelling in unreserved coaches, Railways have significantly increased the facilities for passengers demanding general class travel. During the last financial year 2024-25 alone, 1250 general coaches have been utilised in various long-distance trains. In the current financial year (upto December 2025), 767 Coaches have been utilised for permanent augmentation.**

**To cater to the travel demand of the low and middle income families, Indian Railways have taken up manufacturing of 17,000 non-AC coaches (general/sleeper) over the next 5 years.**

**On IR, the percentage of non-AC coaches, is about 70% as indicated below:**

**Table 1: Distribution of coaches:**

<b>Non-AC coaches (general and sleeper)</b>	<b>~57,200</b>	<b>~70%</b>
<b>AC coaches</b>	<b>~25,000</b>	<b>~30%</b>
<b>Total coaches</b>	<b>~82,200</b>	<b>100%</b>

**The number of seats available for non-AC passengers has also increased. The current composition is as follows:**

**Table 2: Distribution of seats:**

<b>Non-AC seats</b>	<b>~ 54 lakhs</b>	<b>~ 78%</b>
<b>AC seats</b>	<b>~ 15 lakhs</b>	<b>~ 22%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>~ 69 lakhs</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Further, to cater to the needs of passengers desirous of availing unreserved accommodation, Indian Railways (IR) operate unreserved non-AC passenger trains/ MEMU / EMU etc. for affordable travel, which are in addition to the unreserved accommodation (coaches) available in Mail/Express services.**

**Overall, the passenger patronage of Indian Railways is showing steady and rapid growth trend, with consistent increase recorded during as under:**

<b>Year</b>	<b>% growth w.r.t previous year</b>
<b>2022-23</b>	<b>~ 82% (previous year 2021-22 being Covid year)</b>
<b>2023-24</b>	<b>~8%</b>
<b>2024-25</b>	<b>~6%</b>

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