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All India Railwaymen's Federation

(Estd, 1924)

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No.AIRF/7(Policy)
No.AIRF/43(Policy)
No.AIRF/77(ii)

Dated: December 3, 2010

Shri V.N. Tripathi,
Member Staff,
Railway Board,
New Delhi

Dear Sir,

Sub: Accommodation for the officials of AIRF for attending PNM/DC-JCM meetings with the Railway Board

After secret ballot elections, **25** office bearers of AIRF were supposed to attend PNM meeting with the Railway Board and **19** DC/JCM. But it is unfortunate that, as per some old instructions issued from the Railway Board, only four Retiring Rooms are used to be reserved for AIRF office bearers for attending above-mentioned meetings.

Since Railway Board PNM/DC-JCM meetings are a part of official discharge of duty of the office bearers attending PNM/DC-JCM meetings with the Railway Board, they should be allotted accommodation either in the Retiring Rooms or Officers Rest House. As per Board's instructions, AIRF office bearers are entitled for free accommodation in the Officers Rest House.

Hope, Railway Board will issue necessary instructions to all concern to accommodate all the **25** office bearers of AIRF for attending PNM Meeting and **19** office bearers for attending DC/JCM meeting with the Railway Board in near future.

Yours faithfully,

(Shiva Gopal Mishra)
General Secretary

Copy to: General Secretaries, all affiliated zonal unions – for information.

The Member Traffic,
Railway Board,
New Delhi

Attn: Shri Vivek Sahai, Member Traffic, Railway Board

Dear Sir,

Sub: Non-availability of reservation to passengers who come to PRS Centres – on line booking through IRCTC – need to curtail on-line booking.

There have been persistent complaints from the public that although they come to Reservation Office hours before the opening of PRS, still they do not get confirmed accommodation.

Advance Reservation Period(ARP) for booking accommodation in any train starts ninety days in advance from 08.00 a.m onwards. In view of the vast gap between the supply (availability of berths) and the demand(request for confirmed berths) the accommodation always gets filled in matter of seconds, if not in minutes, especially, during the summer/winter/pooja seasons and also on holidays, such as Fridays/Sundays.

Often public blames ECRCs for not getting accommodation, which is totally incorrect since booking of reservation can be made through on-line also which is done by the IRCTC.

While Hon'ble Minister of Railways is emphasizing for human approach on all the issues, booking through internet is depriving lakhs of passengers who come to Reservation Office to get confirmed ticket.

Booking through internet gives an unfair advantage to a select group of individuals who through IRCTC get undue advantage than the passengers who come to Reservation Office and wait even from previous day night onwards.

The crux of the issues is as follows

1. Indian Railways run 2440 Mail/Express trains which carry reserved accommodation. On an average, daily 12,00,000 berths/seats are booked in a day.
2. Indian Railways Passenger Reservation System is 99% computerized with allotment of berths being totally automated. There are 1839 Passenger Reservation System Centers(PRS Centers) in India having around 7120 terminals from which public can make their reservation/cancellation for any of the trains operated by the Indian Railways.

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3. It is to be pointed out that, even in twenty four coach formation trains, number of sleeper coaches is limited to thirteen/fourteen only, which has a maximum total carrying capacity of 1008 Sleeper Class berths. After excluding Tatkal Coaches and various quotas, maximum general accommodation available is only around 720. These 720 berths are sought by 7120 terminals functioning in the Indian Railways System spread across 1839 PRS locations. Even if 10% of the terminals alone seek reservation for a particular train, they will not be able to get confirmed accommodation. Thus, even among the PRS Centres, wide mismatch exists between availability and supply.
4. Rereservation request of a passenger at the counter(PRS Centres) is dealt by the ECRC in the PRS System. Bookings are done based on certain “forms” which get loaded on the computer monitor of the operator wherein, ECRC has to feed details, such as train number, date of journey, class, boarding point, from and to stations, number of passengers, name, age, sex, choice of berth, concessions, concession codes and mobile number of passenger before data is transmitted to PRS server for making the reservation(Annexure-I).
5. Above application forms gets loaded on computer monitor of every ECRC in all PRS Centres all over the India only at 08 hrs., 00 minutes, 00 seconds, 00 nano seconds (08:00:00 hrs). Then only, ECRC can start feeding details of the passenger, starting from train number to final confirmation of the data before it is transmitted to the PRS Centres.
6. On an average, the number of characters he has to type ranges from 140 characters to 180 characters depending upon the name of passenger, concession code etc., for this, the time taken by the operator ranges from 25 seconds to 40 seconds.
7. Whereas, for persons, who are booking through internet, this application form gets uploaded on their monitor from 04.30 a.m itself. Hence, the person booking through internet, feeds entire information well before start of the PRS and wait till 08:00:00 hrs. when the opening date booking commences. By repeatedly pressing “**Return Key**” in computer key board, they send data well ahead of PRS terminals in view of the time gap of 25 seconds to 40 seconds available to them.
8. Thus, data from internet reaches PRS servers ahead of PRS counters and their request for accommodation gets allotted and PNRs generated. This is the reason why on the opening date, more than 70% of the accommodation is allotted to internet booking than the persons who wait at PRS counters.

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9. Reserved accommodation is a scarce commodity and the Indian Railways has bounden duty to distribute the same to the people without favouring a particular type of channel of booking.
10. Internet booking can only be an additional facility to public and should not become major or sole channel by which reserved accommodation can be booked.

When Hon'ble MR is emphasizing, protecting and serving interests of ordinary public, who forms majority of travelling passengers in the Indian Railways, they should be taken care of and their interests should be protected, unfair advantage available to a select few users of internet should not be allowed.

Therefore, we request your good offices to rectify the same as follows:-

- (a) Advance Reservation on opening day(90 days in advance) should be made available through the internet only after 09:00 a.m. onwards. Then only, passengers who come to PRS Centres overnight will get their confirmed accommodation when PRS Centres open at 08:00 a.m.
- (b) This is technically feasible, wherein even though internet booking opens at 04:30 a.m, if the date of journey is for 90th day, then no booking is entertained by the system till 08:00 a.m.(only data can be fed) and, therefore, shifting it to 09:00 a.m. will not be a technical impediment at all.
- (c) Therefore, opening day booking through internet should be allowed only from 09:00 a.m. onwards.

Yours faithfully,

(Shiva Gopal Mishra)
General Secretary

DA/As above

Copy to: General Secretaries, all affiliated zonal unions. This refers to GS/SRMU/MAS's letter No.MU/199/97 dated 17.11.2010.