



Wheelchairs Available at 5,868 Railway Stations Across Country to Assist Divyangjan and Senior Citizens

196 Battery Operated Vehicles Available at 79 Major Railway Stations, Prioritising Divyangjans, Senior Citizens, Sick Passengers, and Pregnant Women

Concessional Online Ticket Booking Extended to Divyangjan and Patients with Certain Illnesses; One Escort Also Eligible for Same Concession

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Wheelchairs are provided by Railways and are given to attendants of the Divyangjan, Senior Citizens etc free of cost to escort them from and to the trains. However, whenever attendants are not available, licensed porters (Sahayaks) can be hired on pre-fixed nominal rate to escort the Divyangjan etc. Information in this regard is displayed at prominent places in railway station premises. At present, wheelchairs are available at 5868 stations over Indian Railways.

Other initiatives taken towards providing improved facilities for elderly, disabled and sick passengers include the following:

- (i) In the computerized Passenger Reservation System (PRS) there is a provision to allot lower berths to Senior Citizens, Female passengers of 45 years and above automatically, even if no choice is given, subject to availability of accommodation at the time of booking.
- (ii) A combined quota of six to seven lower berths per coach in Sleeper class, four to five lower berths per coach each in Air Conditioned 3 tier (3AC) and three to four lower berths per coach in Air Conditioned 2 tier (2AC) classes (depending on the number of coaches of that class in the train) has been earmarked for senior citizens, female passengers 45 years of age and above and pregnant women.
- (iii) Instructions have been issued for earmarking a minimum of 07 seats for senior citizens in 1st and last 2nd class general compartment for entire period of local train services on suburban sections of all Zonal Railways.
- (iv) After departure of the train, if there are vacant lower berths available in the train and if any person with disability booked on the authority of handicapped concession or a senior citizen or a pregnant woman, who has been allotted upper/middle berth, approaches for allotment of vacant lower berths, the on board Ticket Checking Staff has been authorized to allot the vacant lower berth to them making necessary entries in the chart.

(v) The following reservation quota for Divyangjan has been earmarked in all Mail/Express trains including Rajdhani/Shatabdi type trains irrespective of the availability of concessional facilities to Divyangjan:-

a) Four berths in Sleeper class (two lower and two middle). b) Four berths in 3E or 3A class (two lower and two middle). (The class out of these two i.e. 3E/3A in which quota is to be earmarked can be decided by Zonal Railway concerned keeping in view the number of coaches of that class available in the train). c) Four berths in Special Reserved Coach for Disabled (SLRD) coach of Garib Rath Express trains. d) Four seats in reserved Second Sitting (2S)/ air-conditioned Chair Car (CC) in those trains which have more than two coaches of these classes.

(vi) Instructions have been issued that in all Mail/Express Trains (except fully reserved trains), the SLRD coaches should be treated as unreserved coaches earmarked for exclusive use of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan).

(vii) In case of Garib Rath Express Trains and other fully reserved trains, these coaches are treated as reserved for booking by Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) travelling on handicapped concession on payment of due fare of that class on first come first served basis.

(viii) Instructions have also been issued that in the tickets issued through Computerized Passenger Reservation System, to the extent feasible, one lower berth should be allotted to the Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) and the person accompanying him/her as escort should be allotted middle/upper berths near the person with disability subject to availability of accommodation.

(ix) After departure of the train, if there are vacant lower berths available in the train, and if any Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) booked on the authority of handicapped concessional ticket, who has been allotted upper/middle berth, approaches for allotment of vacant lower berths, the on-board ticket checking staff has been authorized to allot the vacant lower berth to them making necessary entries in the chart.

(x) Separate counters are earmarked at various Passenger Reservation System (PRS) centres for dealing with the reservation requisitions received from Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), senior citizens, Ex. MPs, MLAs, accredited journalists and freedom fighters, if the average demand per shift not less than 120 tickets. In case there is no justification for earmarking of an exclusive counter for any of these categories of persons including Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), one or two counters depending upon the total demand are earmarked for dealing with the reservation requests for all these categories of persons.

(xi) Concessional online ticket booking facility has been extended to the Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) on the basis of photo identity cards issued by the Zonal Railways and to patients suffering from certain illnesses. One escort accompanying the Divyangjan and patients suffering from certain illnesses is also eligible for same element of concession.

(xii) Battery Operated Vehicles (BOVs) are provided at major railway stations to passengers on 'first come first serve' basis with due preference to Divyangjans, Senior Citizens, Sick passengers and Pregnant women. This facility is provided 'free of cost' through Corporate Social Responsibility/Sponsorship and on chargeable basis through service provider. At present, 196 BOVs are available at 79 stations, out of which 165 are on chargeable basis, 10 are free via publicity route and 21 are free via CSR route.

However, upgradation of passenger facilities including enhanced facilities to Divyangjans, sick and elderly persons is a continuous and ongoing process.

This information was provided by the Union Minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting and Electronics & Information Technology, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, in a written reply to a question in Lok Sabha today.

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