



Minister of Railways Releases New Water Management Policy

GreenCo Certificates developed by CII Given to Three Units of Indian Railways viz. Diesel Locomotive Works (Varanasi), Perambur Carriage Works (Chennai), Lalaguda Carriage Workshop (Hyderabad)

Minister of Railways inaugurates expansion of Alternate Train Accommodation System aka VIKALP for the benefit of Waitlisted Passengers with Effect from 1st April 2017

VIKALP Scheme is Presently Available for E Tickets Only

Posted On: 22 MAR 2017 6:24PM by PIB Delhi

Minister of Railways Shri Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu released New Water Management Policy in Indian Railways and handed over GreenCo Certificates to Diesel Locomotive Works (Varanasi), Perambur Carriage Workshop (Chennai), Lalaguda Carriage Workshop (Hyderabad). The certificate developed by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) is given for adopting good green practices. Shri Suresh Prabhhu also inaugurated expansion of VIKALP scheme into other sectors. Chairman, Railway Board, Shri A. K. Mital, Member Traffic Shri Mohd Jamshed, Member Engineering Shri AK Mittal, Member Rolling Stock Shri Ravindra Gupta, Member Staff Shri Pradeep Kumar and other Railway Board Members and senior officials were also be present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion,, Minister of Railways Shri Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu said that World Water Day should not be celebrated only once in a year. There is no point celebrating only once rather steps should be taken daily to make this World Water Day more meaningful. In Railways, there is large area of land in its jurisdiction, by virtue of it, large number of water bodies lies in its jurisdiction. Railways has taken steps to restore water bodies in each zone of Indian Railways and revived them. One such 200 years old water body was restored in South Central Railways. In this water policy, water audits, restoration of water bodies and recycling of water will be ensured. Indian Railways Water Policy is not one day affair, it is our commitment for all time. Target has been set for plantation. 5 Crores saplings are to be planted in 3 years. 1.25 Crore saplings are targeted for this year. Environment Directorate has been set up in the Railway Board. A mission of Rs. 41000 Crore for saving in energy bill has been set. 1000 MW target of solar energy production has been set out of which 500 MW will be through Rooftops and 500 MW on land. Railways has been committed for environment. Railways is working with UNEP to achieve this. Science Express has been started for awareness about Climate Change and other Environmental issues.

He also said that Railways is being reformed, and there is a clear road map. Our efforts are targeted towards ensuring confirmed tickets for all, safety of the passengers, zero accidents, speed enhancement of trains and reach of Railways in far off regions in our country. Railways have sanctioned 12,500 Kms doubling, tripling. It is to be noted that 60% of the traffic is concentrated in 16% of Indian Railways network. To achieve the targets set for 2020, Railways have fastened the commissioning of doubling, tripling. To make the passenger experience better LHB Coaches have been introduced. Speed enhancement is Railways' priority on trunk routes like Delhi- Mumbai, Delhi- Howrah. Under the VIKALP Scheme, passengers will be immensely benefited. It is a transparent scheme in which the passengers will be provided confirmed reservation in alternate trains without giving extra fare or any refund provided for the difference of fare. This will ease the problems of passengers.

Backgrounder

Water Policy on Indian Railways

Indian Railways, the lifeline of the country, carrying 23 million passengers every day is the largest passenger carrying system in the world. It is also the single largest consumer of natural resources, at the same time also a major contributor to green environment due to reduced GHG emissions. Indian Railways had been taking a number of steps to become further environment friendly.

Indian Railways have now finalized a water management policy which covers all aspects of water use, recycling, conservation and recharge of groundwater. This is a progressive and creative policy where field units will be motivated to recycle and save water. The objective is to improve water use efficiency by setting up water Recycling Plants, Rain Water Harvesting Plants, Sewage Treatment Plants and effluent treatment plants on Railway Land. Another forward looking provision is participation of private players for recycling water for non-potable usage on BOOT basis.

GreenCo Certificates to Railway Workshops

GreenCo Rating System, developed by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) is the first of its kind framework in the world, aimed at catalyzing green practices in Indian industry. The objective is to define and assess "How Green is a company" and facilitate the way forward for further improvement and promote world class competitiveness through Green strategies. The framework adopts life-cycle approach while evaluating the activities of a unit/facility on green front.

Diesel Locomotive Works (GreenCo Silver), Varanasi and Perambur Carriage Workshop (GreenCo Bronze), Chennai have been certified by CII GBC as identified in the MOU. In addition Lallaguda Carriage Workshop (GreenCo Silver), Hyderabad have credibly achieved certification on their own.

Alternate Train Accommodation Scheme (VIKALP)

Occupancy pattern of reserved accommodation in Indian Railways is not uniform. It varies over peak and lean periods, sector to sector and also over different types of trains. While there is vacant accommodation in some trains, in other trains on the same sector passengers remain waitlisted and unable to travel and Railway has to refund the ticket fare to such passengers i.e. losing on two fronts – on one hand berth going vacant in a train, on other Railways are granting refund to waitlist passengers on the same sector.

To avoid accommodation going vacant in different classes of a train an upgradation scheme was introduced in 2006 wherein passengers of lower class are upgraded against vacant accommodation available in upper class without realization of difference of fare. However, there was no scheme to take care of upgradation/transfer across different trains running between the same Origin - Destination pairs.

To meet this requirement Alternate Train Accommodation Scheme (ATAS) was conceptualized and introduced in November 2015 under the name "VIKALP" where an optional facility was given to shift passengers remaining waitlisted irrespective of booking quota and concession at the time of charting in the booked train to be given confirmed berth in an alternate train which was leaving within a specified time gap. Initially this scheme was introduced on Delhi-Jammu and Delhi - Lucknow sectors with a limited scope of transferring the passengers across Mail/Express/Superfast trains only for passengers with e-tickets booked through internet. **Fully Waitlisted passengers opted for VIKALP should check PNR status after charting.** Either all passengers of a PNR or none will be transferred to alternate train in same class. VIKALP opted passengers who have been provided accommodation in the alternate train will not figure in the waitlisted charts of their original train. The passenger allotted alternate accommodation can travel in the alternate train on authority of original ticket. Waitlisted passengers of original train shall not be allowed to board the original train if allotted alternate accommodation. If found travelling, they will be treated as travelling without ticket and charged accordingly. Passengers once provided alternate accommodation in alternate train will be treated as normal passengers in alternate train and will be eligible for upgradation. In rare situations, passengers who have been provided alternate accommodation might get dropped/re-allotted in alternate train due to last minute change in composition of the alternate train at the time of chart preparation. **Passenger will also get SMS alert on their Registered mobile phone number about getting confirmed alternate accommodation.** When an ATAS opted passenger opts to cancel, after he/she has been given an alternate accommodation, he/she will be treated as a CONFIRMED passenger and the cancellation rules will apply accordingly. Once an ATAS passenger has been allotted alternate accommodation, journey modification will not be permitted. If required, the passenger will have to cancel the ticket and book a fresh ticket for modified journey. When a passenger who has been allotted alternate accommodation has not performed his journey in the alternate train, he can claim for refunds by filing a TDR request.

The scheme was subsequently reviewed and in April 2016 it was extended to five more sectors i.e. Delhi-Howrah, Delhi-Mumbai, Delhi-Chennai, Delhi-Bangalore and Delhi- Secunderabad sectors. This was implemented from May 2016. The scope of the scheme was limited to similar category of trains. The passengers could not be shifted across all categories of trains. The feedback of the scheme was not encouraging due to this limitation.

From 1st April 2017, the Vikalp/ATAS scheme is being further expanded to provide shifting the waiting list passengers of one train across all categories of trains without realization of any difference of fare or grant of refund as the case may be. Thus a passenger booked in a normal Mail/Express train can be shifted to an alternate Mail/Express, Rajdhani, Humsafar, Duronto, Shatabdi, Special train or Suvidha train in the same class of accommodation or vice versa subject to opting for this scheme.

The rationale behind allowing this facility is that the reserved accommodation is a perishable commodity and once a train leaves a platform with a vacant seat/berth, the potential revenue is lost to railways. This is expected to optimize berth utilization across all trains, carry more passengers as well as increase earnings by reducing refunds of waitlisted tickets. **The expanded "Vikalp" scheme will be available on e-tickets to start with but will be extended to PRS tickets as well.**

AKS/MKV/AK



