



Home / Economy / Coronavirus Impact: Indian Railway Suffers A Massive Stroke

Coronavirus Impact: Indian Railway Suffers A Massive Stroke

 Bharti Jain  Mar 24, 2020



In consideration to curb the spread of Covid-19 infection, Union Railways Minister Piyush Goyal issued advisory on Sunday to suspend all passenger railway movements till March 31, 2020.

Though closing the operations is imperative in the critical state of national emergency, but it is an undoubted onslaught on country's economy specially the transportation sector where the million numbers of daily travelers have sunken down to a few hundreds.

The railway sector with a rich network of around 13,500 passenger trains attributing to the revenue of INR 50,161 Cr (as on March, 10) was expected to cross the last year's figures of INR 51,057 Cr (F.Y 2018-19), when the pandemic broke out. It is an irony that while the railway was inching close to the annual targets and streamlining many high speed projects for the coming time, it had to suffer a major slowdown like various other economic sectors across the country.

The decline began earlier this month at the rate of 6% (w.r.t the same period in F.Y 2018-19) when travelers started to cancel their tickets. As reported by Confirmkt, Bengaluru-based online train ticket discovery and booking engine, the number of such cancellations varied from 37% to 55% until last week when 200 trains were cancelled.

Taking pro rata passenger traffic earnings of INR 145.4 Cr per day, 55% ticket cancellation dropped the earnings to INR 65.4 Cr per day and 200 train cancellations further brought down the revenue to INR 64.46 Cr per day which means a loss of INR 80.94 Cr per day i.e INR 566.55 Cr for the whole week.

The Indian Rail Network with a passenger capacity of 23 million people is the world's fourth largest rail network in the world. Now with the orders of complete shutdown, the financial damage is inexplicable and nothing can be guaranteed until the virus is contained.

As of now, Indian Railway (IR) is contributing to the national cause by taking remarkable measures such as equipping railway hospitals with isolation beds, running sanitization drives in train coaches, setting up of clinics along with quarantine facilities across stations for providing cost-effective access to healthcare. IR has also created an online dashboard for coordination with all zonal railways and live-monitoring of their

progress.

It would be wrong to say that railway has shut down. It is planning a better travel experience for the passengers as soon as the trains start rolling down the tracks again.



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The author is an Electronics and Communication Engineer, graduated from Amity School of Engineering and Technology, GGSIPU, Delhi in 2011 who started her career as a Digital Signal Processing Firmware Engineer in Azcom Info solutions Pvt. Ltd, Delhi-NCR. She has worked on Physical Layer of LTE in MATLAB and C for over two years, delivering the TI emulators to French army for LTE-based communication. Presently, she is a PMP Certified Project manager in RITES Ltd, Ministry of Railways. With an immense experience of management of Signaling and Telecommunication projects for Indian Railways and energy sectors across the country such as Chhattisgarh, Allahabad, Vishakhapatnam, Jaipur, etc, she is also working on Semi High Speed Rail projects. During her academic period and professional journey, she has received training in several technical courses such as 'TPWS' from IRISSET, 'Automatic Fare Collection System' and 'Basic Signalling Course' from DMRC, and Project Management Professional Course as the member of the global Project Management Institute, USA. She has also received various accolades from the company for her innovative efforts and technical publications. Apart from that, she is an ISO 9001:2015 qualified Lead Auditor

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