

# Indian Railways prepares new zero-based timetable for trains! Over 6,000 ‘unremunerative’ stoppages to go

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Indian Railways prepares new timetable! Once Indian Railways implements its “zero-based timetable”, more than 6,000 unnecessary stoppages of regular train services will be shed! A scientific manner of running train services, the zero-based timetable allows creating more elbow room for goods and passenger carriers, resulting in better speed and efficiency. During the lockdown period, the national transporter completed the work of making the timetable with help from IIT-Mumbai, according to an IE report. The introduction of every train, as well as every stoppage into the zero-based timetable, is justified by operational need on a clean slate, hence zero-based. According to the report, such moves are on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For keeping a stoppage, the criterion is that it should result in a minimum of 50 people embarking and disembarking in a day. According to the sources quoted in the report, on the basis of that, more than 6,000 “unremunerative” stoppages may be removed, in order to make way for efficient running of trains.

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According to the Chairman of Railway Board, VK Yadav, the timetable will result in separate paths for passenger trains and goods trains. The system will ensure separate dedicated time slots for maintenance of trains and railway tracks, which is known as “corridor blocks”, where no traffic is allowed on a particular section for a certain amount of time. The national transporter used to observe corridor blocks many years ago. The introduction of a large number of trains into the system, over a period of time, rendered the practice unviable. Yadav also said that the new timetable will be implemented when normal train services are resumed. Even if some stoppages are removed, the national transporter will ensure that there are other train services that serve those stops, he said.

Meanwhile, a number of initiatives of Indian Railways are awaiting the normal resumption of train services. One of the initiatives of Indian Railways is the “Content on Demand” service. Approximately 5,000 long-distance train services are likely to get this service. With this service, railway passengers can stream content on their devices during a train journey. However, this initiative could not be launched because of the COVID-19 pandemic, even though Indian Railways shortlisted an operator on a revenue-share basis.

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