


# Railways to add some more trains on routes which are running full: Piyush Goyal

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July 15, 2020

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"We are monitoring the entire situation very regularly. In a review meeting yesterday, I found that our current occupancy level is also about 70-75 per cent. Only about 40 trains are going full. So, I am looking if I can add some more trains on those 40 routes which are going full. Opening up the entire service won't do any good because there are no passengers who want to travel. There are trains with 10-15 per cent occupancy. We have to be practical about it. Freight is moving on full speed," Goyal said when asked when passenger train services will fully resume.

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Speaking at the India Foundation Dialogue 70 via video conference, Goyal said that at present trains are not running to their capacity as passengers are still not ready to travel in public transport due to pandemic.

"We started 125 pairs of trains across the country as special (trains) but we have not still reached the full potential of our passenger traffic. The average occupancy is around 70 per cent. Very few trains are going full and passengers are still not ready to travel in public transport," he said.

Passenger service trains were suspended in March when the lockdown was imposed to contain coronavirus. However, services partially resumed in May.

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The minister said that freight trains are almost running at full capacity and its average speed are currently at 44-45 kmph.

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"We increased the speed of freight trains. The average speed of the freight trains was around only 23 km, we are currently at 44-45 kmph. Our plan in the post-COVID world is to time table trains these trains so that they can run along with passenger trains at this high speed," Goyal said.

"Therefore, move freight trains in different parts of the country much faster, more efficiently ...bringing down cost of logistics. These are flip side benefits. We have used the COVID period to improve the railways. Railway freight movement is about 90 per cent levels," he said.

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The minister emphasised that not a single passenger died because of train accident between April 2019 to March 2020.

"From April 2019- March 20 was the first year in 167 year history where there was not a single passenger died because of a train accident," he said.

The minister said that Indian Railways will be fully electrified by 2023 end.

"We are doing electrification at a very fast pace. We are now almost 60 per cent plus electrified. And by 2023 end, we should be completely electrified. Then Indian Railways will be the world's largest rail network running fully electric," he said.

"We have already initiated a plan to set up solar equipment. Our plan is to set up 20,000 megawatts across the country," he said.

Goyal said that CCTV cameras will be installed at railway stations across the country for the security of passengers.

"In the last two years, our focus has been on child and women's safety. We are going to install CCTV at stations, then trains and 5,600 stations have WiFis. Most of them were installed in the last 12 months. Once we have CCTV, WiFi, it will ensure security. Over 4,600 Sharmik trains which ran till now have RPF contingent for security. That's why robbery, dacoity and nefarious elements did not take place," he said.

Asked if Indian Railways will run trains to Bhutan, the minister said: "My last trip before COVID was to Bhutan, one of the areas of discussion was to take the Railways into Bhutan. They made a request to me while I was in Bhutan, I asked Railway board to depute two top officials to Bhutan. They arrived in Bhutan within 24 hours. I gave them instructions and they moved from there by car to go and inspect potential sites where we can Railway into Bhutan."

"We already have links with Nepal and Bangladesh. We are looking to expand our Railway network passing through Bangladesh. It will provide a much shorter route to go to northeast and will cut down travel time by 12 hours in some cases and goods will reach much faster and at much less cost. We are working with Bangladesh," he said.

*This story has been published from a wire agency feed without modifications to the text. Only the headline has been changed.*

Topics

## Railways

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