

Railways to introduce Australian technology to fight train fires

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New Delhi: Despite a number of safety drives carried out by railways, fire accidents continue to take place, raising serious questions over the effectiveness of the national transporter's preparedness.

There were 10 major fire incidents on trains since 2012 which claimed 65 lives besides causing a damage to the railways to the tune of around Rs 8 crore.



The Bandra-Dehradun Express which caught fire on Wednesday morning. PTI
Realising the seriousness of the situation, the railways is now planning to introduce an Australian technology to make fire alarms efficient.

Nine passengers were charred to death today when three non-AC coaches of Bandra-Dehradun Express caught fire in the wee hours in Thane, the second such incident in the last fortnight.

There was also a minor fire incident today in the Lucknow Shatabdi due to brake jam. Smoke started emanating from the wheels of the Delhi-Lucknow Shatabdi Express triggering panic among train passengers this morning at Ghaziabad station.

Earlier on 28 December, an air-conditioned coach of the Bangalore-Nanded Express train caught fire in the early hours in Anantpur district of Andhra Pradesh, killing 26 people and injuring 13 others.

On 30 June, 2012, 35 passengers were killed and 25 others injured when a coach of the Delhi-Chennai

Tamil Nadu Express caught fire near Nellore in Andhra Pradesh.

Though railways claim to have taken various measures to prevent fire in trains, recurrence of such mishaps on regular basis is a matter of concern for the government.

"We are introducing a new Australian technology for fire alarm system in our AC coaches as the earlier system tried in Bhubaneswar Rajdhani was found not foolproof. The new system is on trial in Jammu Rajdhani," a Railway official said.

Similar automatic fire alarm system will be fitted in 20 trains in future.

About the other measures, the official said portable extinguishers are being provided in coaches to cater for emergencies due to fire accidents. Railways have already spent Rs 8.63 cr on fire extinguishers for trains.

Detailed instructions have been issued to zonal railways for observance of safe practices in handling of pantry cars and for ensuring periodical inspection of electrical and LPG fittings in the pantry cars.

Intensive publicity campaigns to prevent the travelling public from carrying inflammable goods are regularly undertaken, he said.

PTI