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Randeep Singh Surjewala, Incharge Communications, AICC has issued the following statement to the press today:-

Modi Government's Gift to People of India – Surge Pricing Before the Festivals

Privatised and Profiteer Out of Public Interest –Sole Moto of Modi government

Congress Party Demands Immediate Roll Back

Battling rising price of essential commodities and run away food inflation, the latest decision by Modi government to impose 'Surge Pricing' through 'flexi fare system' in [Rajdhani](#), Duranto and Shatabdi trains is a rude shock for the ordinary people of India. Coming as it does immediately before the festival season of Dussehra, Diwali, Chhat Puja, Onam, Bakr-Eid etc.; it proves the anti-people mindset of Modi government to profiteer and fleece people of India.

Shockingly, the base fares of these trains will increase by 10% with every 10% of berths sold subject to a maximum hike of 50% for all AC 3-tier, AC 2-tier and Chair Car. This means with the rising demands of tickets, the prices will automatically increase to a limit of 1.5 times.

Surge pricing occurs when a company raises the price of its offering if there is an increase in demand. The system of surge pricing was first introduced by app-based cab service like Ola and Uber in the national capital. It was later quashed by Delhi High Court after protests by the commuters as the fare which on normal day would be around Rs.13 to Rs.15 per km touched as high as Rs.35 per km under surge prices. What has been found to be illegal by the Courts for the Uber/Ola surge prices is being implemented by Modi government for Railways. There cannot be a bigger irony.

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Policy of Railway surge pricing is nothing but an under hand tool to collect 1000 crore annually by burning the pockets of honest middle class families, who still see Railways as the only cost affective and viable option of travel despite its shortcomings. It is high time the Modi Government realises its mistake and rolled back this '*tuglaki farmaan*'.

Putting Railways Out of the reach of common man - Unprecedented Hike in Raliway Tariffs by Modi Government:

(1) Right after coming to power and days before the Railway Budget, the Government affected a steep hike 14.20% in '**Passenger Fares**' and about 7% in '**Railway Freights**' on June 20, 2014. Another hike in Freight Fare amounting to 4.35% was again affected in November, 2015. This has resulted in a steep hike in prices of all essential commodities, including food articles.

- (2) Since May, 2014; there has been an unprecedented increase in 'Rail Passenger Fares' by 20%.
- (3) The rates of Platform Tickets were hiked by 100% (Rs.5 to Rs.10) in March, 2014.
- (4) Tatkaal Charges were hiked by 33% in December, 2015.
- (5) Ticket cancellation charges were doubled in November, 2015.
- (6) There have been as many as 16 major train accidents till December, 2015 wherein 88 people lost their lives and 421 were injured.
- (7) Instead of enhancing Track capacity, introducing New Trains, (The numbers fell down dramatically by almost 88%, since the UPA years) improving services and investing in safety infrastructure, the Government is busy pushing the Bullet Train between Ahmadabad and Mumbai at a whopping Rs.1 Lakh Crore. The aim obviously is to fulfil the Prime Minister's whims and award contract to Foreign Companies.
- (8) The Government has been single mindedly pursuing the agenda of Privatizing Railways, under the garb of Corporatization. Several Corporations have been incorporated by the Railway Ministry to ensure the loot of Prime Railway Real Estate by-passing necessary codal formalities and subverting Government Financial Rules (GFR's).
- (9) Similarly, Corporations will also ensure that track up gradation and manufacturing of locomotives and coaches will in effect be done by chosen crony friends of the Government.
- (10) For all the grand standing done by the Railway Minister in his last Budget speech when he promised a Freight Growth Target of 850 MT basing it on the expected 8-9% GDP growth and increased coal traffic, the reality is that the Freight Growth remains flat at April/December, 2014 levels at 816 MT during April to December.
- (11) While the Railways had budgeted for Rs.1,11,852 crore in 2015-16, the collection till now has now been a meagre Rs.80,526 crore till December, 2015. One wonders if the remaining more than Rs.30,000 crore can be recovered during remaining months of the Financial Year.