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Working paper by the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) on migration trends.

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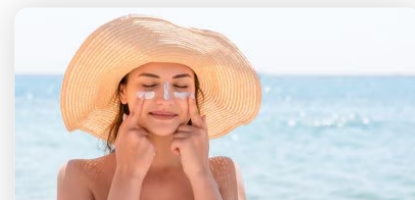
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According to its analysis, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka and Telangana are the major origin states for arrivals into Maharashtra. (Express Photo by Vishal Srivastava)

West Bengal and Rajasthan are the new centres of migrants movement from across the country and have found place in the list of top five states where maximum numbers of general or second class passengers travelled to by the Indian Railways, shows the latest working paper of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) on migration trends.

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Other three states in the top five are [Uttar Pradesh](#), [Maharashtra](#) and [Madhya Pradesh](#). According to the analysis of data from the Indian Railways on unreserved tickets of non-suburban passengers (150+ kms journey), the council has concluded that while most of the states showed reduction in the passenger headed to them from outside, possibly as a result of an overall reduction in migration, [West Bengal](#), [Rajasthan](#) and [Karnataka](#) are the states that showed the maximum amount of growth in percentage share of the arriving passengers.

Compared to 2012 data, [Andhra Pradesh](#) and Bihar are now ranked a notch lower. Titled as “400 Million Dreams!”, the PM advisory body in its report said that the overall number of migrants in the country has reduced by 11.78 per cent as compared to the 2011 census.

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The paper hypothesised that improved economic opportunities in smaller cities are among the reasons for the slowing migration in India.

Apart from ticket bookings data from Indian Railway Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS) for year 2023 and 2012, EAC-PM used mobile telephone subscribers’ roaming data and district level banking data on remittances to come up with the figure of 40.20 crore migrant, as of 2023, in the country. The total number of migrants in Census 2011 were 45.57 crore.

According to its analysis, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka and [Telangana](#) are the major origin states for arrivals into Maharashtra. Similarly, for Delhi, the major origin states are Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh.

Apart from this, [the major destinations](#) for general class travellers heading out from Uttar Pradesh are Delhi, Bihar, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana. Similarly, major Destinations for passengers heading out from Bihar are Delhi, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Jharkhand.

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The report, which has been authored by economist Bibek Debroy, who passed away last month and was Chairman of EAC-PM, and Devi Prasad Misra, an IRS officer posted as Director in the council, showed that Uttar Pradesh to Delhi was the most popular state-to-state route in the country traversed by migrants using the Railways. Gujarat-Maharashtra was second, Telangana-Andhra Pradesh in third place, Bihar-Delhi was in fourth slot and Bihar-West Bengal in the fifth position.

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The paper goes on to provide district-level passengers movement data also. It shows that Mumbai remained on top position of destination district (in-migration) for non-suburban general class passengers. Bengaluru Urban was at the second position, Howrah was third, Central Delhi was fourth and Hyderabad was at the fifth position. When compared with 2012 data, the order of districts have changed, but the composition of the top ten stays constant.

However, if we look at the top originating districts of non-suburban (150+ km) passengers, it shows some new source districts in 2023 that were not there in 2012. While Valsad remains on the top, which is 193 kms from Mumbai, Villupuram ([Tamil Nadu](#)), Saharsa (Bihar), Moradabad (UP) and Murshidabad (West Bengal) are the new entrants in the top-10 originating district list. The trend could be reflective of daily commuters travelling up and down for work from Valsad to Mumbai in the first case, using the suburban railway service.

The report says that the top origin districts are coalesced around major urban agglomerations viz. Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, [Bangalore](#), Kolkata etc.

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The analysis further shows that at district level, Murshidabad to Kolkata was the top route of general class passengers movement.

Paschim Bardhaman to Howrah, Valsad to Mumbai, Chittoor to Bengaluru Urban and [Surat](#) to Mumbai were in second, third, fourth and fifth position respectively.

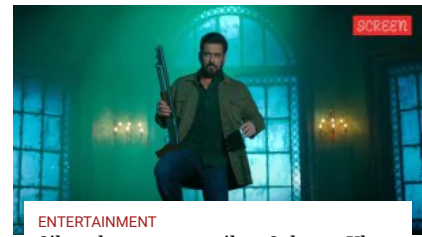
The report also provides an answer to the question of who are the major migrants to cities like Delhi and Mumbai. While Agra, Patna, Kanpur Nagar, Jhansi and Bareilly are on the top source district for general class passengers to Delhi, Dausa and [Ludhiana](#) are the new districts in the top-10 list of origin districts to Delhi. In the case of Mumbai, while the number of passengers from the origin districts have changed, there is just one new entrant Sindhudurg in the top 10 list. Valsad, Surat, Nashik, Ratnagiri and Varanasi are top-5 origin districts of the passengers to Mumbai.

EAC-PM used unreserved second class (Mail & Express/Ordinary) ticket data as it is the cheapest class of tickets on railways, which is used by blue collar migrants (working class people). While the railways data shows the trends in the movement, it has some limitations also as it this data does not capture details such as age, gender, reasons for migrating etc. Also, all railway data is recorded from Station to Station, therefore the actual origin and destinations may not always be captured accurately. The similar exercise was undertaken in [Economic Survey 2016-17](#), when Arvind Subramanian was Chief Economic Advisor, for calculating the migration trends.

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**Dheeraj Mishra**

Dheeraj Mishra is a Principal correspondent with The Indian Express, Business Bureau. He covers India's two key ministries- Ministry of Railways and Ministry of Rc [... Read More](#)

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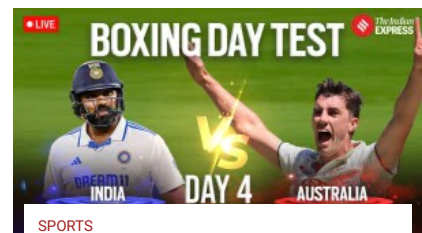
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