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# Human Error In Bengal Train Accident? What Railway Board Boss Said

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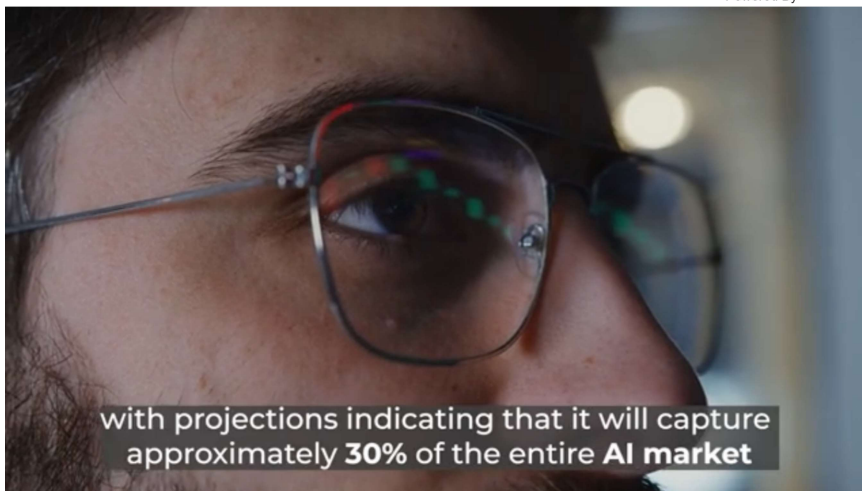
Railway Board did not give out the speed the goods train was travelling



New Delhi: Prima facie findings into the Kanchanjunga Express accident in West Bengal show that the goods train violated speed restrictions it had to follow given the "defective" automatic signalling system on the section and rammed into the stationary passenger train while "over-speeding", the Railway Board said on Monday.

Seven passengers and two railway staffers were killed and 41 injured in the accident that occurred on the Ranipatra Railway Station (RNI)-Chattar Hat Junction (CAT) stretch in the state's Darjeeling district in the morning.

The board said though the driver of the goods train was given authorisation to cross all red signals between RNI and CAT as the automatic signalling system was "defective", the train's speed was above the permissible limit prescribed for this kind of a situation.



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The goods train driver was "over-speeding" and due to this, Kanchanjunga Express between RNI and CAT, the board reports that the driver, who was killed in the accident, was authority called TA 912 by the station master of Ranipatra

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Human Error In Bengal Train Accident? What Railway Board Boss Said Kanchanjunga Express accident cross all red signals.

However, the Railway Board did not give out the speed the goods train was travelling at on the section.

The driver of the Kanchanjunga Express adhered to the norms to be followed during a defect in the automatic signalling system, stopped at all red signals for one minute and proceeded at 10 kmph, but the goods train's driver "disregarded" the norms and hit the stationary passenger train from behind, the board said.

Explaining the norms, an official of the board said, "The TA 912 was issued to the (goods train) driver and, according to norms, when encountering an automatic signal at "ON" aspect (red signal) and after waiting for the prescribed time, the driver should have proceeded with great caution at a speed not exceeding 15 kmph where visibility is good, and not exceeding 10 kmph where visibility is not good until the next stop signal." "He has to stop the train for one minute during the day time and two minutes at night at a red signal, and then start moving following the restricted speed norms," the official said.

The authority letter, TA 912, said, "Automatic signalling has failed and you are hereby authorized to pass all automatic signals between RNI and CAT." It also mentions that there are nine signals between RNI and CAT and authorises the goods train driver to cross all, ignoring whether they are showing red or caution (yellow or double yellow).

Earlier, a source in the railways had told PTI that the automatic signalling system between RNI and CAT was defective since 5.50 am Monday.

"Train No. 13174 (Sealdah-Kanchanjunga Express) departed Rangapani station at 8.27 am and stopped between RNI and CAT. The reason for the stopping of the train is unknown" the source told PTI.

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According to another railway official, when the automatic signalling system fails, the station master issues the written authority TA 912 that authorises the driver to cross all red signals in the section because of the defect.

"The station master of Ranipatra had issued TA 912 to Train No 1374 (Sealdah-Kanchanjunga Express)," the source said.

He added that "around the same time, a goods train, GFCJ, departed Rangapani at 8.42 am and hit the Kanchanjunga Express from behind at 8.55 am, resulting in the derailment of the guard's coach, two parcel coaches and a passenger coach (of the passenger train)".

"The collision happened because a goods train disregarded the norms and hit the Kanchanjunga Express which was on its way to Sealdah from Anartala" Railway

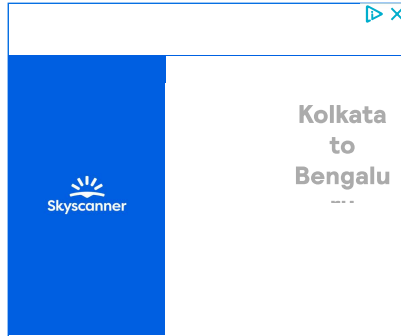
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Human Error In Bengal Train Accident? What Railway Board Boss Said Kanchanjunga Express accident Kanchanjunga Express, which was on its way to Sealdah from Agartala, Railway Board Chairperson Jaya Varma Sinha told reporters here soon after the accident that took place.

However, the Indian Railway Loco Runningmen Organisation (IRLRO) questioned the railways' statement that the driver violated the red signal.

The organisation's working president Sanjay Pandhi said, "It is incorrect on the Railway Board's part to say that the driver has to stop the train at a red signal for one minute and proceed with restricted speed after getting TA 912." "Once a driver gets TA 912, he can proceed with whatever speed because the authority letter suggests that the line in the section is clear.



The document said that the loco pilot of the goods train was authorised to cross red signals because they were defective. The authority letter doesn't mention any speed restriction," Mr Pandhi added.

*(Except for the headline, this story has not been edited by NDTV staff and is published from a syndicated feed.)*

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