

HINDUSTAN TIMES

Business chokes as 'Lifeline of Delhi' sabotaged

Rail, air bookings severely affected

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, May 19

TUESDAY, TOO, was a bad day for all those who wanted to book a railway ticket.

Due to the ongoing agitation by Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) personnel, Indian Railways' Passenger Reservation System (PRS) was severely affected.

PRS is a web of computers across the country managing train reservations.

"On Monday, eight PRS terminals ran slow. On Tuesday, the number came down to two," said Sanjay Bajpai, Northern Railway spokesman.

"If PRS counters run slow, less bookings can happen, so it is a huge loss of revenue to the Railways."

Air travellers fared no better at Indra Gandhi International Airport for the second day as phone lines functioned erratically.

On Monday, some flights were even delayed as boarding passes had to be issued manually after internet-based processing systems of many airlines could not function.

"The local network depends on MTNL. If it is for processing, and as these couldn't work, boarding passes were issued manually by some airlines, leading to delays on Monday," said an airport official who didn't wish to be named.

"Though the situation is better now, the phone facilities are still erratic."

"Issuance of boarding cards for passengers did not suffer because we are not dependent on the Internet for ticketing. However, the inquiry service was affected because of damaged telephone cables," an Air India spokesperson said.

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— SANJAY BAJPAI
Northern Railway
spokesman

based in New Delhi.

"What is disturbing is that all the senior MTNL officials were inaccessible. They had simply switched off their phones. We didn't know what was happening and whom to approach," said Supra.

Pizza delivery services were also affected.

"Even during rush hour, we were unable to take calls due to the MTNL strike. The management decided to send a text message to all our customers informing them about the alternate number. The most affected stores were in South Delhi areas, such as Defence Colony, Greater Kailash I and II, among others," said Abhay Kumar, Assistant Manager, Decimus, Greater Kailash II.

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On Day 2, MTNL strike hits life

HT Correspondent
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DID YOU have a frustrating day trying to book a railway or airline ticket? Or maybe order a pizza?

That's because a strike by employees of the government-owned Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd (MTNL), who were demanding a pay hike, entered its second day on Tuesday.

"The agitating officials have cut optical fibre cables and have disturbed servers," said E.S.P. Sinha, chairman and managing director MTNL. He claimed all services would resume by Tuesday evening.

In some hospitals, like the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, the strike meant no outgoing calls, though patient care services were not affected.

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