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Rat-eaten bags cost Railways

Kamini Mehta| TNN | Updated: Oct 26, 2017

CHANDIGARH: Train rats chewed off a passenger's luggage first and now Rs 17,000 from the Railways' account. District Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum has awarded this sum as compensation to Sector-45 resident Manoj Sharma.

On January 30, 2016, the Sharma family had travelled from Chandigarh to Pune by the Yesvantpur Sampark Kranti Express, and during the journey, the rodents damaged his two bags. He filled the travelling ticket examiner's complaint book at the Bhopal station and demanded Rs 17,000 for the loss. He even approached the railway authorities, later.

The Railways argued that the complainant had neither booked those bags nor paid any charges for the same while travelling, so under Section 100 of the Railways Act, 1989, the Railways aren't responsible for the loss, destruction, damage, deterioration, or non-delivery of un-booked luggage. The forum observed that the central question was: "Whether or not the Railways are liable to compensating the complainant?"

The Railways accepted that there were chances of rats' entering the coach at Chandigarh but stated that the authorities concerned had counselled the pest-control agency and regretted the inconvenience to the passenger. In the eyes of the forum, it proved on record that it was the rats that had damaged the luggage, and for that the negligence of the railway authorities was to blame.

The forum directed the Railways to pay the complainant Rs 7,000 for the loss, Rs 5,000 as compensation for deficiency in service and unfair trade practice, and another Rs 5,000 as cost of litigation.