

India denies Samjhauta was locked from outside

Indian Railways Tuesday denied Pakistan's allegation that the doors of the two compartments ripped apart by blasts that killed at least 68 people were locked from outside.

Northern Railway's chief PRO Rajiv Saxena said the passengers on the Old Delhi-Attari train that links up with the Samjhauta Express to Lahore travelled like any other train.

Pakistan's Railway Minister Sheikh Rashid had alleged Monday after the blasts near Haryana's Panipat town that the doors were locked from outside, preventing people from escaping - 553 of the 757 passengers on the train were Pakistanis, he said.

The minister was reported as saying that people died or were critically injured because they were in a 'locked up cage'.

'It is absolutely wrong and incorrect to say that the two bogies were locked from outside,' Saxena told IANS.

He added that Indians and Pakistanis travelling from Delhi to Lahore by train are subjected to customs and immigration formalities only at Attari station.

The only difference between this and any other train, he said, was said that the Old Delhi-Attari train stops at Ambala for 'crew change'. After that it goes directly to Attari, near Amritsar, the last station on this side of the border.

After passengers complete customs and immigration formalities, they board the Samjhauta Express, which stops at the border checkpoint of Wagah. It moves on to Lahore after Pakistanis complete their formalities.

(© IANS / India eNews)