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Li Lei, industrial analyst who specializes in aviation research at Minzu Securities

TRAVEL

Missing rail ticket renews old debate

College student unhappy about being forced to pay twice; policy defended

By CANG WEI in Nanjing
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The insistence by China's railway authority that a passenger who lost his ticket pay to have it replaced has aroused another round of discussion on the internet.

The passenger, a college sophomore surnamed Hu, claimed when attempting to exit the station in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, on June 14 that he had mislaid his ticket.

Railway workers insisted that he must buy a replacement. But Hu complained that the railway's real-name ticketing system could easily prove that he had bought the ticket originally and so he should simply be given a new one.

The policy is designed to prevent ticket fraud. Tickets are used to verify that a passenger has paid the correct amount to reach a given destination.

Fraud could happen, for example, if a passenger on a long journey with multiple stops gives or sells his ticket to another person who had only paid for a short trip, and then claim the ticket was lost. The other passenger, who paid for a short trip, could

booking information to a conductor and can show that the booked seat was not occupied by someone else.

Hu complained that the process is too complicated.

"Why do I have to pay for the same booked seat twice?" he said. "It's easy for the railway workers to verify my booking information with their real-name booking system."

Pan Wei, a judge in a similar case in December, said it would be possible for some people to take advantage of a policy allowing free replacement tickets.

"The real-name ticketing system can verify passengers' ticket booking but not their exit at a station," Pan said. "People can exit the stations with others' tickets easily."

Moreover, Pan said, "It would be expensive to upgrade current equipment or hire more railway workers to verify people exiting stations, as some people expect. All passengers would need to pay for an upgraded fare system or the additional workers' salaries. That's unfair to passengers who keep their tickets well."

The China Railway Corporation declined to comment, saying that workers are doing their jobs in accordance with regulations.

Peng Yining contributed to this story.

“Why do I have to pay for the same booked seat twice?”

A college sophomore surnamed Hu

use the ticket to exit at the final destination.

Hu is one of a number of passengers who have been required to pay for a replacement ticket to exit a railway station.

According to the railway authority, since 2012 a person who loses a ticket before traveling can buy a replacement up to 20 minutes before the end of ticket checking. A refund for the lost ticket will be provided at the final destination within 24 hours of arrival if the lost ticket has not been used by another person to exit.

Those who mislay their ticket on the train must buy a replacement before exiting. A refund will be given later if the person provides their



Animals rescued

Two lar gibbon monkeys, a species under State protection, were saved by police and put on display in Kunming, Yunnan province, on Monday. The police busted a wildlife trafficking ring and seized 96 wild animals, including slow loris and pythons. The ring contacted buyers and sold animals online, police said.

WANG YUHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

TRANSPORTATION

Passengers, crew injured in turbulence

By WANG YING in Shanghai
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At least 17 people were hurt in powerful turbulence encountered by a flight from Frankfurt, Germany, to Shanghai on Monday.

Air China flight CA936 was scheduled to take off at 8 pm Frankfurt time (2 am in China) and arrive at Shanghai Pudong International Airport at 12:55 pm — a flight of approximately 11 hours.

The flight encountered severe turbulence as it entered the Shanghai region that resulted in injuries to four male and 13 female passengers,

including a senior German couple above age 70. The injuries to one of the females was serious, said a report on eastday.com.

The injured were "passengers who did not buckle up and stewards who were patrolling the cabin and serving passengers", a statement from Air China to China Daily said.

"The crew sent an emergency notice to the ground immediately," it said, and ambulances took the injured to Pudong New Area People's Hospital for medical treatment immediately upon landing.

By 2 pm on Monday, four passengers and two flight attendants remained hospitalized for

observation and treatment. Two other passengers were discharged.

"Thunderstorms are taking place often nationwide at the moment, so it is common for aircraft to encounter severe turbulence. Passengers are requested to fasten their seat belts throughout the flight," said Li Lei, an industrial analyst who specializes in aviation research at Beijing-based Minzu Securities.

On an Air Canada flight en route from Shanghai to Toronto in December, at least 20 people, including 3 children, were hurt in heavy turbulence, Xinhuanet.com reported.

"The continuous expansion of aviation companies' fleets has also increased the number of encounters with turbulent air in flight, but meteorological forecasts are also becoming more precise," Li said.

For passengers, having the seat belt fastened is the primary precaution available, with or without a turbulence warning from the crew.

Data from several severe incidents of turbulence showed that virtually all the people seriously injured were passengers who failed to buckle up or crew members who were serving passengers in the cabin, Xinhuanet reported.

International Education Column — If you are interested in this, please contact: gavin.chen@chinadaily.com.cn

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