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Monday, 17 October 2016

Mr. Narendra Modi
Hon'ble Prime Minister of India
New Delhi 110 001

Mr. Suresh Prabhu
Minister for Railways
Government of India
New Delhi 110 001

Respected Mr. Narendra Modiji and Mr. Suresh Prabhuji,

Reg: Card / Cash Transactions Security on IRCTC Tourism Portal

You will agree that there are many dangers doing financial transactions on the internet. There is a firm belief among users that the IT team of the merchant would provide all necessary information technology safeguards to protect the secure financial information of the users.

IRCTC Tourism website [www.irctctourism.com] is a property of the Indian Railways. It is managed by your departmental information technology team. The website is linked to the IRCTC ticketing website and many financial transactions, including but not restricted to booking of E-Bedroll, accommodation, travel packages, flights, hotels etc. happen on the portal.



The services are a welcome boon to travellers around India. The portal allows for booking services and paying for them online.

All payments gateways are expected to be completely secure. All sites that seek credit card / debit card / bank information of the users use HTTPS [Hyper Text Transfer Protocol Secure] as a secure socket layer [SSL] or Transport Layer Security [TLS] as a sublayer to encrypt & decrypt user page requests as well as pages returned by web servers. This assures users that their card / bank information are secured against attack by hackers or information technology pirates.

The security feature of the ITCTC Tourism website unfortunately appears to have been compromised. Please see picture below.

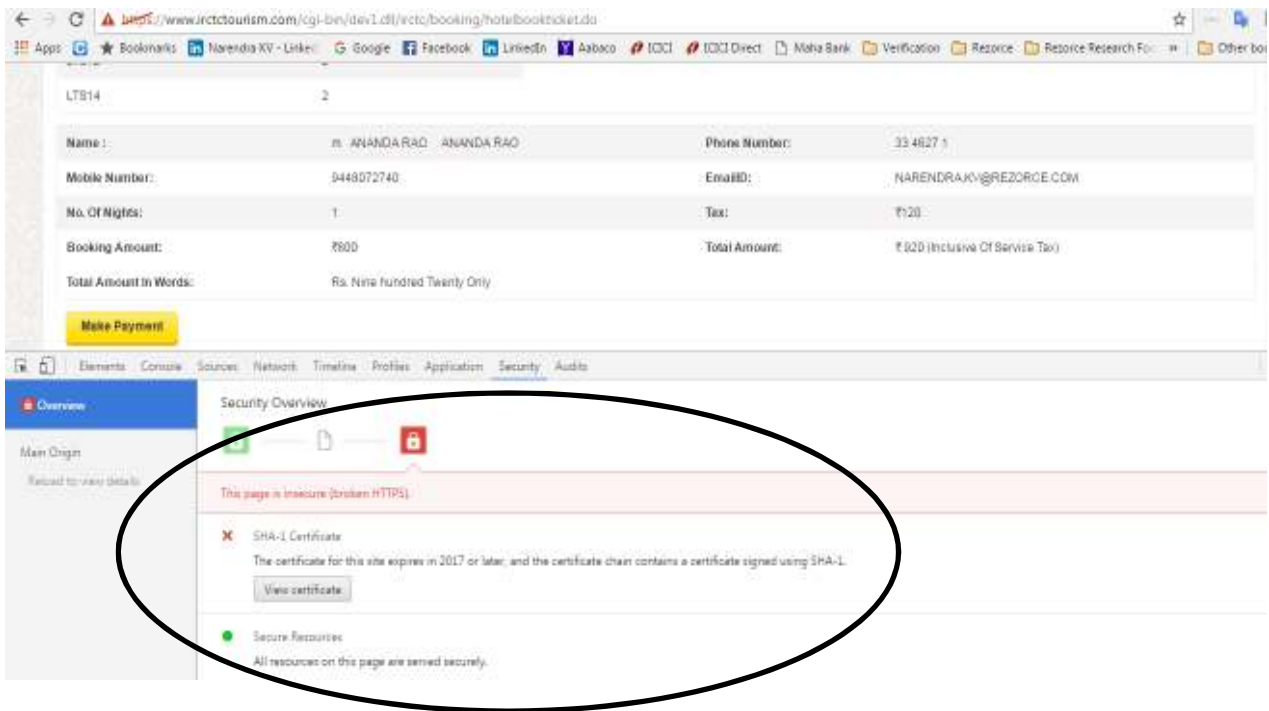
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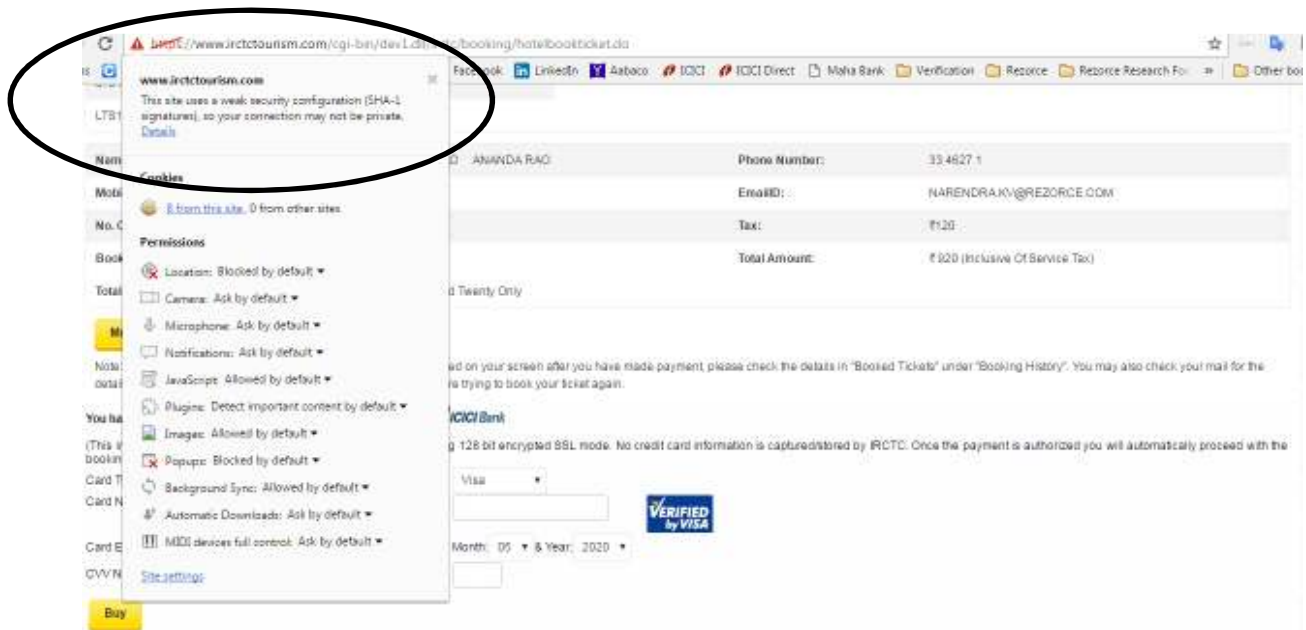
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This problem is visible when one analyses the red colour https: on the top left end of the address bar.



The error message reads "This site uses a weak configuration [SHA-1 signature], so your connection may not be private". Please see the picture above

The threat is further highlighted by the background activity that starts happening on the user's computers as soon as the transaction is initiated. To regenerate this problem, you can observe that there is a red colour button at the end of the address

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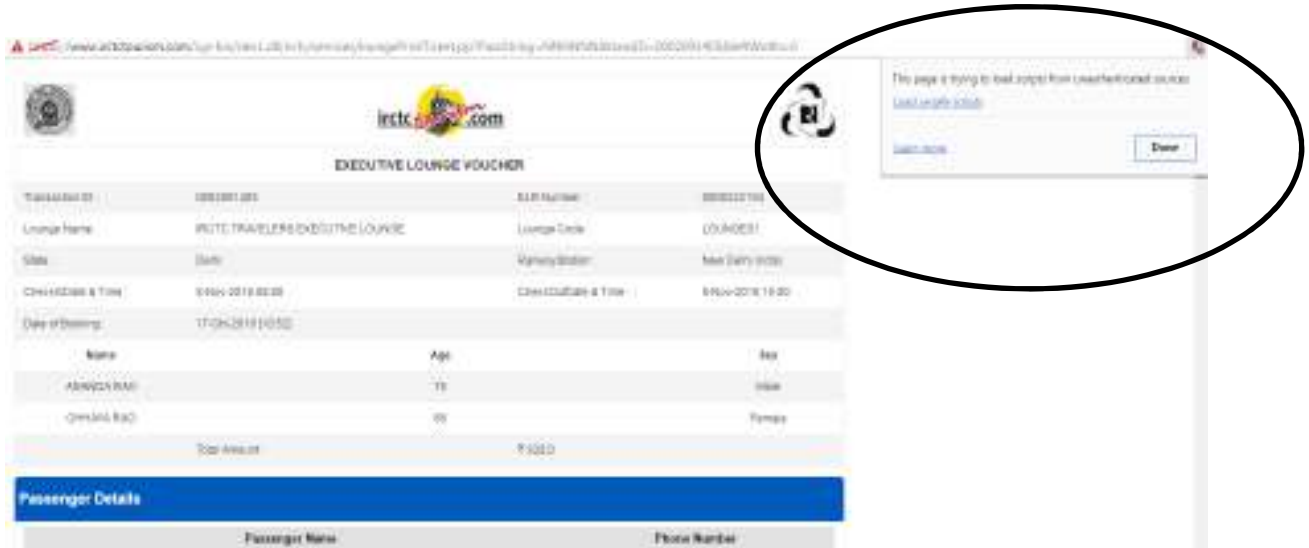
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bar [please see screen shot below] on the right side of the browser. On clicking the button, you will find a message "This page is trying to load scripts from unauthenticated sources".



Prima facie, it appears that the secure financial information of users of the railway portal is compromised through usage at this time.

Action Sought:

1. Considering that thousands of users do financial transactions on this portal every single month, we request you to instruct your IT team to plug this technical loophole on priority and without any further delay.
2. Most users are technically not equipped to understand that their bank / card information is at risk due to this security breach of the portal. Their bank accounts and card numbers may be compromised by hackers. Please initiate one of the two actions, till such time the breach is plugged
 - a. Stop all financial transactions on the portal
 - b. Let users know clearly that they are compromising their financial security using the portal and allow them to take the risk

The implications of this IT Security breach are very serious to lakhs of IRCTC users every minute. Appreciate your personal intervention to handle this serious problem ASAP.

Yours sincerely

Narendra KV

Director | 9243046271 | narendra.kv@rezorce.com

<http://in.linkedin.com/in/narendrakv>

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