

Recruitment scandal in Kapurthala Rail Coach Factory

1897. SHRISUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item appearing in the daily 'Punjabi Tribune', Chandigarh, regarding recruitment scandal in Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala in Punjab;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what action has been taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A news report appeared in the daily 'Punjabi Tribune', Chandigarh on 1.6.2002. This does not refer to any recruitment scandal but alleges improper selection of trainees for imparting training under Apprentices Act, 1961 in Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala in Punjab. The news report primarily alleges nepotism in selection of trainees in favour of candidates belonging to Bihar by neglecting candidates from Punjab in violation of the provisions of Apprentices Act, 1961.

(c) When the matter came to the notice of Railway administration, a departmental committee has been formed to review the procedure of selection of trainees of Act Apprentices, In the meantime, selection for the current year 2002 has been kept in abeyance.

Over-aged rail signalling cabins

1898. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state the total number of signalling cabins which are existing at present and how many out of them are over-aged and have been replaced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA):

* There are 5692 interlocked stations on the Railways. Each of these stations normally has one or more cabins depending upon the size of station and type of signalling system provided thereon.

- * As on 1.4.2002, there were 2388 stations with over-aged (more than 25 years old) signalling equipment. These include 1363 stations on A, B, C, D spl., D-E spl. routes.
- * During 2001 -02, work of replacement of over-aged equipment at signalling cabins of 131 stations was completed.
- * The work of replacement of over-aged equipment at signalling cabins of the 1363 stations is in progress. The work is targeted for completion in the next 5 to 7 years. The rehabilitation/renewal work at the signalling cabins of the remaining stations which are more than 35 years old on E and MG routes is also in progress.

Unsafe rail lines

†1899. SHRIMATISAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the rail lines all over the country are becoming quite unsafe;

(b) if so, whether Government are contemplating to take any steps for safety of these rail lines; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) to (c) No, Sir. Repair and maintenance of Railway track is an on-going process. Maintenance works are carried out regularly depending upon the need. For ensuring safety of traffic, track is inspected regularly and corrective action taken promptly wherever required. Track renewals are also undertaken depending upon the need of renewal and availability of funds. The following further steps have been taken to improve the safety:

- (i) A non-lapsable Special Railway Safety Fund of Rs. 17,000/- crore has been set up for renewal of over-aged assets and for safety enhancement works which also covers track renewal.
- (ii) There has been progressive increase in use of Tie Tamping and Ballast Cleaning Machines for track maintenance. Track Renewal Trains are also being used. This gives superior track geometry.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.