

Railway Freight Traffic

503. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) how much was the Railway freight traffic, in terms of revenue, during April—September, 1998 in comparison to the same period during 1997;

(b) what was the loss of freight revenue during this period, in comparison to earlier years during the same period; and

(c) how Government plan to increase the freight revenue in the coming months?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (1) Railway freight traffic in terms of revenue is as under:

(Rs. in crore)

April—September '98	April—September '97
9735.57	9458.81

(2) Actual Freight Earnings for the five year period from 1994-95 to 1998-99 (April to September) are as under:—

(Rs. in crore)

Year (April—September)	Earnings
1998-99	9735.57
1997-98	9548.81
1996-97	7835.71
1995-96	7346.77
1994-95	6453.27

(c) Railway freight traffic is a derived demand arising out of the requirements of different core sectors of the economy. As a number of steps taken by the Government, demand for rail traffic by different sectors have shown improvement. Besides this, aggressive marketing strategies have been adopted by Railways to give support to rail traffic demand to increase the quantum of rail freight traffic and thereby the freight revenue.

Catering and other services in Trains

504. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the plan of Government to improve catering and other services on board the trains;

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RAJYA SABHA

(b) whether the Government plan to take the help of international experts and private caterers; and

(c) if so the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Improvement in the catering and other on board train services has been taken up as a mission area and detailed specifications for menu, packaging, presentation and services have been standardised in the case of catering services in Rajdhani, Shatabdi and other long distance Mail/Express trains. Thalies have been phased out from the catering services in trains as they are not considered hygienic and instead food is being served in casserole packs where quality is maintained.

(b) and (c) Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation has been set up which will take up the upgradation and standardisation of on board services in trains. Reports from the professional institutes are also being consulted for upgrading the services.

Introduction of Express Trains between Rourkela and Allahabad and Bilaspur and Patna

505. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to introduce an Express train between Rourkela and Allahabad and another between Bilaspur and Patna;

(b) whether the above proposal is going to be implemented during the current financial year; and

(c) if so, the steps taken in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Train Accident

506. SHRI AMAR SINGH:

SHRI ANIL SHARMA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total number of serious train accidents which took place from 1st January, 1998 to 31st August, 1999.

(b) how many of them have been inquired into by the Commissioner of Railway Safety so far; and

(c) what are the reasons for not disposing of the remaining cases?