

Overloading in the Railways

*254. SHRI R.K. ANAND: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that scam of over loading in the Railways has been going on for number of years causing immense financial loss to the Railways;

(b) whether the said scam has since been exposed and if so, the details of action taken by the Railways in the matter including filing of FIRs and blacklisting the firms; and

(c) what action has been taken/proposed to be taken against the officials responsible for monitoring freight movement than mere transfer only?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise. However, one case of First Information Report (FIR) has been registered on West Central Railway and action has been initiated for blacklisting the firm.

(c) Proceeding under Discipline & Appeal (D&A) Rules for major penalty has been initiated against two staff on West Central Railway. Disciplinary action under D&A Rules taken whenever staff are found responsible for any irregularity.

Privatisation of catering services

*255. SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to privatise the catering service in Railways;

(b) if not, the reasons to entrust the catering service to Tourism Corporation; and

(c) what steps are being taken to safeguard the livelihood of the present workers?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) Privatisation of catering services on Railways were announced in the Railway Budget 1991-92. As per Catering Policy issued on 06.01.1992, Railways decided that in future no catering/vending units should be taken up for departmental management and all the new units both static and mobile should be managed by licensees only.

In the Catering Policy 2000 and new Catering Policy 2004, it was reiterated as under:

"In future no catering/vending units should be taken up for departmental management and licensees should manage the services..."

(b) In order to upgrade, professionalise and manage the catering and hospitality services at stations, on trains and on other locations, Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) is being entrusted with the task of providing catering services on Indian Railways.

(c) Departmental catering units are being handed over to IRCTC along with staff on 'as is where is' basis and these staff will continue to serve in the IRCTC on deemed deputation with option to be exercised within three years either for absorption in IRCTC or for reversion back to the Railways. In the event of staff opting to revert to the railways they will be treated as surplus and dealt with as per rules. This has been envisaged mainly to ensure that the staff do not get the feeling that they have been forced to get absorbed in the IRCTC. The transfer of catering staff along with the activities is in accordance with the standard procedure prescribed by Govt. of India. Further upto the period of deemed deputation, maximum of three years, their seniority units will also remain unchanged.

Sky-Bus Metro Project

***256. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE:** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware about the need for the sky-bus metro, a Konkan Railway Project, in the country which is considered to be safer, technically sound, eco-friendly and fitted with anti-pollution devices (SEDS) and also cost effective in comparison to underground and alleviated metro rail;