

mechanism through Catering Monitoring Cell at Head Quarter and Division level. About 27875 inspections have been carried out regularly by the Zonal Railways at all levels, in the last one year from November, 2010 to October, 2011, as a result of which 37.07 % complaints have come down during the same period, as compared to corresponding period of last year, when the management of catering services was under IRCTC.

**Operating a special train to Buddhist Circuits**

**\*164. SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA:** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the proposal of Government of Odisha for operating a special train to Buddhist circuits in Odisha connecting Bodhgaya/Varanasi is under consideration of the Ministry;
- (b) if so, by when the proposal would be cleared; and
- (c) if not, the teething problems in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DINESH TRIVEDI): (a) No, Sir. No proposal is under consideration in the Ministry for operating a special train to Buddhist circuits in Odisha connecting Bodhgaya/Varanasi.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

**Utilization of USOF for broadband services in rural areas**

**\*165. SHRI B.S. GNANADESIKAN:** Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has proposed to utilize the funds under the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), to give subsidy to the telecom operators for providing broadband services in rural areas of the country; and
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by Government to permit private players in rural connectivity and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) and (b) Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) has a number of ongoing and planned schemes to increase broadband penetration in rural and remote areas of the country by