

(b) Action is taken by IRCTC against Principal agents in case of fraudulent activities in accordance with the scope of their contractual obligations with IRCTC and the nature of the fraudulent activities. These actions include deactivation of Agent Ids, levy of penalty, suspension, etc.

(c) IRCTC appoints Principal agents taking into consideration their annual turnover from travel business and the distributor/dealer/outlet network.

(d) and (e) IRCTC levies a service charge of Rs. 10/-per e-ticket for Second/Sleeper class and Rs. 20/-per e-ticket in case of all other classes {1AC, 2AC, 3AC, AC Chair Car (CC), 3E, First Class (FC)} irrespective of the number of passengers booked on an e-ticket on the IRCTC website. In case of tickets booked through IRCTC's authorized agents an additional service charge of Rs. 10/- per e-ticket in case of non-AC class (Second/Sleeper) and Rs. 20/-per e-ticket in respect of other classes (1AC, 2AC, 3AC, CC, 3E, FC) is levied. Proliferation of ticketing facility has been done for public convenience irrespective of pressure of work at the counters.

New norms for tatkal reservation

893. SHRI ARVIND KUMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that common man did not have access to train tickets, both tatkal and general, during this summer due to menace of touts across the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has revised the tatkal scheme and has implemented new norms for tatkal reservation with effect from 10 July, 2012;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the details of the outcome of changes in norms for tatkal tickets?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BHARATSINH SOLANKI): (a) and (b) Indian Railways have taken various measures to facilitate access to general as well as Tatkal reservation by common man. Accordingly, more than 2900 computerised Passenger Reservation System (PRS) locations have been opened and facility of booking through internet has also been provided. However, during peak rush periods when the demand outstrips the availability, some cases of black marketing of railways tickets by touts come to notice at the time of surprise inspections and preventive checks conducted at reservation offices. During the period from April, 2012 to June, 2012, large number of checks were conducted during which 930 unauthorised agents/touts were apprehended/prosecuted.

(c) and (d) In order to reduce the scope of cornering of tickets by touts and also to balance the load on the computerised Passenger Reservation System (PRS) as well as on internet, with effect from 10.07.2012, the timing of opening of reservation of Tatkal tickets has been changed to 10.00 hours on the previous day of journey instead of 08.00 hours as per earlier provision.

(e) These changes have resulted in even distribution of load on PRS and internet and better availability of Tatkal as well as general tickets on the opening day of reservation on internet.

Safety related vacancies

894. SHRI SABIR ALI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of safety related vacancies in Railways as on 30 June, 2012 and since when these have been lying vacant; and

(b) the steps being taken to fill up the existing vacancies on priority basis?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BHARATSINH SOLANKI): (a) The number of vacancies in safety category posts as on 01.04.2012 is 149271 (provisional). Arising and filling of vacancies is a continuous process. Vacancies arise due to normal retirement, voluntary retirements, deaths, promotions, creation of posts, etc.

(b) The policy of the Railway Administration is to fill up available vacancies promptly as per laid down procedures. Notifications for filling up of about 1,90,000 posts, including safety category posts have already been issued.

Sanitation services

†895. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has entrusted sanitation services of toilets in trains and toilets and platforms of railway stations to private companies; and

(b) if so, the details of such train routes and since when this arrangement has been made alongwith the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BHARATSINH SOLANKI): (a) and (b) For improving the standards of cleanliness, hygiene and sanitation in toilets in trains and at stations, in addition to utilization of departmental resources, cleaning activity is also being carried out through outsourcing to Professional Agencies.

Such activities have been outsourced by Zonal Railways on trains, stations etc. on various train routes as per local requirements for the past several years.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.