

(b) if so, the full details thereof; and

(c) whether Railways propose to grant similar concession in freight in respect of refined salt so that the Gujarat salt manufacturers, who are meeting country's major requirement, can survive?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K.J. SURYA PRAKASH REDDY): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. As compared to other essential commodities such as foodgrains (class-130), salt is classified at a lower rate (class-110). In order to further cushion the impact of railway freight on the price of salt as applicable to the common man, a distance-based, graded freight concession scheme exists in the case of booking of non refined salt meant for human consumption (both iodized as well as salt meant for iodization) as under:—

Distance (km.)	Concession on normal freight rates	Minimum freight
1-1000	Nil	As applicable
1001-1500	10%	Not less than freight for distance 1000 kms.
1501-2000	15%	Not less than concessional freight for distance 1500 kms.
2001-3000	20%	Not less than concessional freight for distance 2000 kms.
3001 and above	25%	Not less than concessional freight for distance 3000 kms.

There is no proposal to extend this concession scheme to refined salt, free flow salt, branded vacuum salt etc. at present.

Rules on Prohibition of Activities Affecting Cleanliness and Hygiene

611. SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways have finalised the Rules on Prohibition of Activities Affecting Cleanliness and Hygiene in the railway premises;

- (b) if so, the details in this regard;
- (c) whether Railways have strengthened their human resources for effective implementation of above mentioned Rules in various Zones;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the manner in which Railways propose to utilise the fine collected for contravention of these Rules?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K.J. SURYA PRAKASH REDDY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Rules under the Railways Act 1989 have been notified under a Gazette Notification to penalize persons affecting cleanliness and hygiene at railway premises with fines not exceeding Rs. 500/-.

(c) and (d) Under these Rules, the following officials are authorised to collect fines:—

- (i) The Station Master or Station Manager,
- (ii) An officer not below the rank of Ticket Collector of the Commercial Department or an officer of equivalent rank of Operating Department;
- (iii) Any other official(s) authorised by the Railway Administration.

(e) The purpose of levying fines is to reduce the activities affecting cleanliness and hygiene at railway premises. The amount of fines so received is deposited under the head 'Sundry Earnings' which is a part of the total revenue of Indian Railways.

Advantage of high-speed trains

612. SHRI AVINASH PANDE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware of the advantages of high-speed trains over aeroplanes for medium distances of 500-700 Kms.;
- (b) whether Government has undertaken any study to assess the profitability of high-speed trains;
- (c) if so, the details of the findings of this study;
- (d) whether Government has taken any further action on the same;