

and the on-roll strength as on 1.04.2014 is 1.32 million (provisional). The on-roll strength details over the years is given below:

Year	On-roll Strength
1997-98	1.58 million
2003-04	1.38 million
2009-10	1.36 million

(d) There has been significant increase in the percentage of staff costs' share in working expenses after implementation of Government's decision on the recommendation of the VIth Central Pay Commission and the major challenge of coming years would be to substantially improve employee level productivity.

Duty hours of Loco drivers

3337. SHRI PALVAI GOVARDHAN REDDY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of duty hours of locomotive drivers in Railways;
- (b) whether it is a fact that drivers are demanding for friendly working hours and Railways are not acceding to their request; and
- (c) the reasons that 17000 posts of drivers are lying vacant and Railways are not taking any steps to fill them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) The working hours of Loco pilots are regulated in accordance with the provisions contained in the Railways Act, 1989 and the Railway Servants (Hours of Work & Period of Rest) Rules, 2005. They are rostered to work for 104 hours per fortnight.

(b) On the demand of recognized Federations, a High Power Committee was constituted to review the working hours of running staff. The Committee has submitted its report which entails in-depth deliberation with various stakeholders.

(c) Arising and filling up of vacancies is a continuous process and action has been initiated to recruit 21569 numbers of Assistant Loco Pilots, who shall be posted against the existing vacancies of drivers.

Reports on new railway lines under East Coast Railway

3338. SHRI A. V. SMAMY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the survey report and estimated cost report of Junagarh-Bhadrachalam and Kantabanji-Jeypore new railway lines have been received by the Railway Board from East Coast Railway; and

(b) if so, whether any action has been taken on these reports to accord approval and for provision of funds for their implementation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) Survey Reports and cost estimates of parts of the proposed new lines, *i.e.* Junagarh-Nabarangpur, Nabarangpur-Jeypore and Jeypore-Malkangiri have been received in Railway Board.

(b) The present shelf of ongoing projects, which is worth ₹ 1.82 lakh crore and the limited availability of resources, prohibit Railways from taking up new projects at present.

Condition of services offered in Ajmer Shatabdi

3339. SHRI G.N. RATANPURI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Ajmer Shatabdi carries comparatively older coaches with poor hygiene, maintenance, service and sub-standard food, if so, the reasons therefor; and

(b) whether the Ministry would bring Ajmer Shatabdi at par to the standards of Chandigarh Shatabdi, Bhopal Shatabdi and Ahmedabad-Mumbai Shatabdi, if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) No, Sir. It is continuous endeavour of Indian Railways to provide good quality hygienic food to the travelling passengers. If any deficiency in catering services, especially quality of food is found, strict action including imposition of heavy fine is taken.

(b) New Delhi-Ajmer Shatabdi Express is being run with new design Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) coaches. These coaches are of same standards of hygiene, maintenance and service as in New Delhi-Chandigarh, New Delhi-Bhopal and Ahmedabad-Mumbai Shatabdi Express trains.

New train from Ujjain to Varanasi

3340. DR. CHANDAN MITRA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to run a new train from Ujjain to Varanasi;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to introduce a direct daily train between Ujjain and Varanasi for the benefit of pilgrims?