

(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?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. In addition to 3 pairs of direct Mail/Express train services available between Ujjain and Varanasi, a new train viz. Ahmedabad-Patna Express (weekly) has been announced in the Railway Budget 2014-15, which will provide additional connectivity between Ujjain and Varanasi. However, introduction of additional direct daily train service between Ujjain and Varanasi is not feasible, at present, due to operational and resource constraints including terminal/maintenance constraints.

**Poor quality and reduced quantity of food served in trains**

3341. SHRI TARUN VIJAY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in spite of recent hike in rates of food served in Rajdhani/Shatabdi/Duronto trains, there have been cases of poor quality and reduced quantity of meals in these trains;

(b) if so, the number of such complaints and action taken thereon, including fine against vendors, cancellation of vendors' licences etc. during the last three years;

(c) whether complaints redressal and monitoring mechanism needs to be strengthened with web-based system, helpline number, third party audit etc.; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to make catering services passenger-friendly?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) The menu and tariff of Rajdhani/Shatabdi/Duronto express have been revised and implemented with effect from 17.10.2013 after a period of 14 years since the last revision in 1999. Some complaints on quality and quantity of meals have been reported in trains including Rajdhani/Shatabdi/Duronto express trains.

(b) Details of complaints received in last three years i.e. 2011, 2012 and 2013 regarding quality and quantity of meals in trains including Rajdhani/Shatabdi/Duronto and action taken thereon are given in Statement (*See* below).

(c) and (d) Improvement in catering including complaint redressal and monitoring mechanism is a continuous process. Steps taken and proposed to be taken by the Railways to make catering passenger friendly are:- (i) Catering Services Monitoring Cell with a toll free number 1800- 111- 321 at national level has been set-up for real time redressal of complaints, (ii) Quality assurance programme by means of Third Party Audit to ensure quality, (iii) Introduction of Pre-cooked Food (ready to eat meals) to improve the quality, hygiene and to provide variety of options of meals to the passengers, (iv) Introduction of E-Catering so that passengers can book the food of their choice while booking the ticket through internet, (v) A pilot project for feedback of the passengers through Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) has been launched on five trains.