

Hike in train fares and freight charges

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

(a) whether Government has increased train fare including local train fare and freight charges recently, if so, the details thereof, separately, class-wise;

(b) the reasons for increase in train fare/freight charges; and

(c) whether Government would roll back the increased fare/freight charges in view of cumulative inflationary trends due to this sharp increase and sufferings of already inflation hit lower and middle strata of society, and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Though Railways need enormous resources to not only sustain its current performance but to improve upon it, passenger fares had not been increased by Railways since 2002-03; in fact, fares in several segments of passenger services, including Second Class, were revised downwards in subsequent years. With a viewpoint of generating resources that are critically required for funding initiatives in thrust areas, viz. modernization and safety, the fare and freight rates were marginally increased.

Highlights of the fare and freight revision, effective from 25.06.2014 and 28.06.2014 in case of Monthly Season Ticket, are as under:

Passenger:

- A flat 10% increase in all classes plus 4.2% increase due to Fuel Adjustment Component.
- With a view to protect the interest of common man; no increase in passenger fare has been carried out up to minimum distance in all classes (upto 80 kms in second class ordinary (suburban).

Freight:

- A flat 5% increase in freight rates plus 1.4% increase due to Fuel Adjustment Component (FAC).
- Reduction in Low Rated Classes from 4 to 3. Certain concessions in case of some commodities withdrawn.
- Withdrawal of short lead concession for traffic booked up to 100 kms.

- Minimum Distance for charge revised from existing 100 to 125 kms. Distance block for charging freight beyond 2000 kms. have been rationalized to 250 kms. slab instead of 500 kms. slab at present.

Presently, there is no proposal for reviewing the fare and freight structure.

Train accidents

491. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the train accidents occurred during the last one year;
- (b) the main reasons thereof and the details of loss of railway properties due to such incidents during the last one year;
- (c) whether it is a fact that due to a large number of vacant posts, the instances of accidents are increasing, if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the details of the comprehensive measures taken to deal with the increasing incidents of train accidents and for the safety of the people?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) During 2013-14, altogether 71 consequential train accidents excluding incidents of trespassing at unmanned level crossings, took place on Indian Railways. These include 04 collisions, 53 derailments, 07 incidents of fire in train, 04 incidents at manned level crossings and 03 miscellaneous accidents. Besides, there were 46 consequential incidents at unmanned level crossings caused due to negligence of road vehicle users during this period.

(b) Based on the inquiry reports including *prima facie*, out of the above 71 consequential train accidents during 2013-14, 50 accidents are attributable to failure of railway staff, 09 due to failure of other than railway staff, 04 due to sabotage, 04 due to incidental factors, 03 due to equipment failures and cause of 01 accident could not be established. Loss of railway property in these accidents has been estimated to Rs.27.98 crore approximately (Provisional).

(c) Arising and filling up of vacancies is a continuous process and at any point, there would be some vacancies in an organization. Vacancies occur due to normal retirements, voluntary retirements, deaths, promotions and creation of posts etc. There is sometimes a lag between occurrence of vacancies and processing the same for filling up which involves notification of vacancies, holding examinations, finalization of select panels and issue of