

- 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

appointment letters. The Railways are committed to filling up vacant posts, promptly as per the laid down procedure. The number of vacancies do not have a direct correlation to the accidents.

(d) Safety is accorded the highest priority by Indian Railways and all possible steps are undertaken on a continual basis to prevent accidents and to enhance safety. These include timely replacement of over-aged assets, adoption of suitable technologies for upgradation and maintenance of track, rolling stock, signalling and interlocking systems, safety drives, greater emphasis on training of officials and inspections at regular intervals to monitor and educate staff for observance of safe practices. Safety devices/systems being introduced to prevent accidents include provision of Block Proving Axle Counters (BPAC), Auxiliary Warning System (AWS), LED Signals, Vigilance Control Device (VCD), Anti Collision Device (ACD), Train Collision Avoidance System (TCAS) and Train Protection and Warning System (TPWS).

Frequency of trains in Gujarat

492. SHRI DILIPBHAI PANDYA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways have received representations to increase the frequency of various trains running to/from Gujarat, specially Bombay, Delhi through Ahmedabad;

(b) the number of trains available to passengers to visit various pilgrim places like Ambaji and Sidhpur; and

(c) whether Railways intend to increase the frequency of these trains, if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) Yes, Sir. Representations have been received, *inter-alia*, for increase in frequency of trains running to/from Gujarat.

(b) While Sidhpur station is served by 11 pairs of Mail/Express (04 pairs daily, 01 pair bi-weekly and 06 pairs weekly) and 03 pairs of passenger (daily) train services, Ambaji is not connected by direct train service, as it is not on the railhead. At present, Abu Road station (20 km away) serves as the railhead for passengers desirous of visiting Ambaji.

(c) Increase in frequency of existing services is an on-going process on Indian Railways subject to operational feasibility, traffic justification, availability of resources, etc.