

Irregularities in VRS appointments

†1707. SHRI VISHAMBHAR PRASAD NISHAD:

SHRIMATI KANAK LATA SINGH:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Comptroller and Auditor General's report of January, 2011 to March, 2014 has brought to the fore several irregularities in VRS appointments in Railways;

(b) whether Railway Board changed its own rule repeatedly for VRS appointments, thereby clearing the way for such appointments;

(c) the irregularities due to which jobs were given against the rules and at what levels irregularities have been exposed; and

(d) the actual status thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) to (d) The Comptroller and Auditor General has made certain observations in respect of the Safety Related Retirement Scheme (SRRS)/Liberalised Active Retirement Scheme for Guaranteed Employment for Safety Staff (LARSGESS) and appointments made under the scheme.

A Safety Related Retirement Scheme was introduced in January 2004, exclusively, for two frontline safety categories *viz.* Drivers and Gangmen. The working of Drivers and Gangmen has a critical bearing on safety of train operations and track maintenance in the form of quicker reaction time in emergency situations. The objective of the scheme is to improve safety in train operations and track maintenance and for this purpose, maintain comparatively younger age profile of employees.

Under the scheme, appointment is given to the ward of the employees seeking voluntary retirement due to aging, provided the ward is found suitable for appointment in all respects, including medical fitness for the same post.

The scheme was subsequently extended in the year 2010 to specified safety categories in Grade Pay 1800 and thereafter to these categories in Grade Pay 1900 in the year 2011. In keeping with objectives of this scheme, certain changes were made in the rules to permit voluntary retirement for employees of categories specified in the scheme in keeping with ground realities. This was a new scheme wherein changes were necessitated from time to time. Implementation has been done accordingly. Observations made by Audit are being examined.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.