

(c) To ensure effective and seamless passenger security over Indian Railways, a proposal for amendment in the RPF Act, 1957 has been moved by the Ministry of Railways with the concurrence and approval of the Ministries of Law and Justice and Home Affairs to empower RPF to register and investigate passenger related criminal offences in passenger area. Comments of States have been solicited on the proposed amendments in the RPF Act. Comments have so far been received from 25 States. However, the Ministry of Home Affairs has recently conveyed certain observations on the above proposal. Matter is under consideration in the Ministry of Railways.

Semi high-speed train services

449. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to introduce semi high-speed train services between various cities in the country, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether any routes are being considered in the Delhi-Kalka and Delhi-Amritsar sectors, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) It has been decided to introduce Semi-High Speed train services on 160 kmph on New Delhi-Agra Corridor.

(b) An agreement has been signed with French Railways (SNCF) on 50:50 percent cost sharing basis to carry out feasibility study for upgrading speeds to 200 kmph on Delhi-Chandigarh Section of the Delhi-Kalka Sector.

Wi-Fi facility at railway stations

†450. SHRI NARESH AGRAWAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had promised to provide Wi-Fi facility at several important railway stations in the country;

(b) if so, names of the stations where this facility has been made available and by when this facility will be made available at remaining railway stations; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Initially, the Wi-Fi services have been proposed to be provided at 400 railway stations covering almost all 'A1' and 'A' category stations,

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

after which the facility is proposed to be provided at remaining 'A' and 'B' category stations.

Presently, Wi-Fi facility is available at 12 railway stations *viz.* Bengaluru, New Delhi, Chennai, CST Mumbai, Mumbai Central, Ahmedabad, Agra Cantt., Secunderabad, Varanasi, Howrah, Madgaon and Ghazipur.

Wi-Fi facility is proposed to be provided at 709 major railway stations, in A1, A and B category. The number-wise break up of the 709 stations *i.e.* A1-75, A-332 and B-302.

(c) Does not arise.

Food/refreshment served on premium trains

451. SHRIMATI WANSUK SYIEM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether considering the widespread complaints received over the quality of food served on-board, Railways are considering delinking the cost of the food/refreshment served on-board premium trains like Rajdhani, Shatabdi etc. thereby making travel by them cheaper;

(b) whether passengers on these premium trains will now have the option to carry their own food or to order the same from pantry; and

(c) whether Railways propose to engage IRCTC to run pantry services aboard premium trains, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) and (b) No instructions have been issued regarding delinking the cost of the food/refreshment served on board of premium trains like Rajdhani, Shatabdi etc. However, in order to widen the range of food options available to passengers and to mitigate passenger's complaint in regard to catering services, E-catering service has been introduced, through Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) in trains without pantry car or Train Side Vending as well as on 45 designated stations from where passengers of originating/passing trains can avail of this facility. IRCTC has tied up with renowned, reputed and established brands in the field of catering services so that the passengers can order good quality and hygienic food of their choice on payment basis.

(c) A Committee has been set up to examine the entire gamut of issues relating to catering services on Indian Railways.