

- On Board/enroute cleaning facility on identified trains.
- Seats (cushioned seats in first class coach), handholds, fans, lights etc. in sub-urban coaches and, dedicated coaches for ladies and vendors in sub-urban trains.
- Bed rolls in all mainline AC sleeper coaches.
- Water in coaches provided with toilets.

The steps taken to improve the quality of food in Railways *inter-alia* include: (i) Phased introduction of station based e-catering at all A1 and A category stations for widening the range of options available to passengers for ordering food of their choice. (ii) Introduction of precooked food ('ready to eat' meals). (iii) Operation of centralized Catering Service Monitoring Cell (CSMC) (toll free number 1800-111-321) for prompt redressal of passenger grievances relating to the catering activities and real time assistance to travelling public. (iv) Development of modern base kitchens for supply for food to ensure quality at service. (v) Imposition of penalties in case of deficiencies detected in services. (vi) Operation of all India Helpline (No.138) for rail-users to lodge complaints/suggestions regarding food and catering services (vii) A Twitter handle with the address @IRCATERING has also been made operational to cater to the complaints/suggestions with regard to catering services.

To monitor the above, Railways have developed and operationalised an institutionalised mechanism for monitoring of quality and hygiene of catering services through regular inspections at various levels. The passenger satisfaction levels are regularly monitored through direct feedback and other means to address catering complaints.

Action plan to increase speed of trains

†*71. SHRI RAM KUMAR KASHYAP: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is working on any action plan to increase the speed of trains;

(b) if so, the steps being taken to increase the speed of trains by improving the condition of tracks in various railway divisions;

(c) the proposed programme to run Bullet train between New Delhi and Kolkata; and

(d) the number of phases in which the Bullet train is proposed to be operated in this sector and the steps being taken to run a Bullet train between New Delhi and Varanasi?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SURESH PRABHU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. With a view to increasing speed of trains in Indian Railways, 'Mission Raftaar' has been announced in the Railway Budget 2016-17. The mission envisages a target of doubling of average speed of freight trains and increasing the average speed of all non-suburban passenger trains by 25 kilometre per hour (kmph) in next 5 years. The present level of average speeds in Indian Railways for non-suburban passenger trains is 46.3 kmph and for freight trains the average speeds is 24.2 kmph. In order to implement this, a cross-functional mission directorate has been created in Railway Board.

Action Plan for improving mobility and increasing average speed of trains, *inter-alia*, includes removal of speed restrictions, construction of Road Over Bridges (ROBs) and Road Under Bridges (RUBs), right powering of trains, introduction of twin-pipe brake system in wagons, and replacement of conventional loco hauled commuter trains by Main Line Electric Multiple Unit (MEMU) and Diesel Electric Multiple Unit (DEMU) trains.

Some of the important achievements in mobility improvement in Indian Railways are;

- Two pairs of trains between Kanpur-Allahabad section, and one pair of MEMU train between Asansol-Dhanbad section in place of conventional loco hauled passenger trains have already been introduced.
- Two more pairs of trains have been scheduled for switch over to MEMU in Allahabad-Mughalsarai section in July 2016.
- Mobility study of high density Ghaziabad-Allahabad-Mughalsarai section completed. Short term Action Plan under implementation.
- Introduction of twin-pipe brake system in freight trains approved in-principle for implementation in all freight stocks. This will result in faster application and release of brake system consequent increase in speed of freight trains.
- Action Plan for Right powering of freight trains is being worked out. Optimum horse power to trailing load ratio will speed up freight trains and reduce transit time, directly benefitting the customers.
- Removal of Level Crossing Gates for achieving faster speed and improved safety for 2787 level crossing gates targeted for removal in 2016-17.

In addition, the maximum permissible speed of New Delhi-Agra Cantt. section has already been increased to 160 kmph (kilometre per hour) and the first semi-high speed train 'Gatiman Express' has been started from Hazrat Nizamuddin to Agra Cantt. Section on 05.04.2016.

Indian Railways have also identified nine corridors for feasibility of semi high speed rail, Zone-wise details are as under:

Sl. No.	Corridor	Zonal Railways	Status
1.	Delhi-Agra	Northern Central	Gatiman Express with maximum speed of 160 kmph introduced.
2.	Delhi-Chandigarh	Northern	Feasibility-cum implementation study awarded to SNCF (France) on cost sharing basis.
3.	Chennai-Bengaluru-Mysore	Southern, South Western	Feasibility Study for upgradation of speed awarded to ERYUAN Group of Chinese Railways at their cost.
4.	Delhi-Kanpur	Northern, North Central	Quantum of Technical inputs required for upgradation of speed to 160 Kmph have been identified by the concerned Zonal Railways and KONKAN Railway.
5.	Nagpur-Bilaspur	South East Central	
6.	Mumbai-Goa	Central, South Western, Konkan Railway	
7.	Mumbai-Ahmedabad	Western	
8.	Chennai-Hyderabad	Southern, South Central	
9.	Nagpur-Secunderabad	Central, South Central	

It has also been decided to undertake field trials for assessing savings in transit time by using special type Spanish Talgo Coaches on existing New Delhi-Mumbai corridor.

Besides above mentioned measures, Ministry has also announced introduction of faster train services like TEJAS which requires minimal technological inputs and aims at attaining speeds above 130 kmph.

(c) and (d) Feasibility study for a new high speed rail corridor connecting Delhi to Kolkata has been entrusted to M/s. High Speed Rail Corporation (a subsidiary of M/s. Rail Vikas Nigam Limited). Running of high speed trains on the sector including New Delhi-Varanasi is dependent on the outcome of the feasibility study and decision taken thereon.

In addition, feasibility studies of high speed corridors have been awarded to various railway companies and consultants are as under:

Sl. No.	High Speed Corridor	Consultants undertaking feasibility study
1.	Delhi-Mumbai	Consortium of M/s. The Third Railway Survey and Design Institute Group Corporation (Chinese Consultant) and Lahmeyer International (India) Private Limited, India.
2.	Mumbai-Chennai	Consortium of M/s. SYSTRA (French Consultants), RITES and Ernst and Young LLP.
3.	Delhi-Kolkata	Consortium of M/s. INECO- M/s. TYPASA- M/s. Intercontinental Consultants and Technocrats Private Limited (Spanish Consultants).
4.	Delhi-Nagpur	Government to Government cooperation with Chinese Railway Company.
5.	Mumbai-Nagpur	Government to Government cooperation with Spanish Railway companies.

Production of pulses

†*72. SHRI HARIVANSH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the efforts being made by Government to control the increasing prices of pulses in the country;

(b) the steps taken by Government to increase the production of pulses;

(c) the reasons due to which the efforts being made by Government towards increasing the production of pulses are not yielding expected success; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH): (a) Government has taken several measures to control the prices of pulses. A Price Stabilization Fund (PSF) has been established for creating a buffer stock of pulses for effective market intervention, with procurement by designated agencies. Releases from the buffer stock are made to States/Union Territories (UTs) at subsidized rates for retail. Further, States/UTs have been advised to take strict action against hoarding and black marketing under the Essential Commodities (EC)

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.