

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) Yes, Sir. Introduction of Tejas and Antyodaya train services has been announced in Railway Budget 2016-17. Tejas trains will be train services operating at speed of 130 KMPH and above and offering onboard services such as entertainment, local cuisine, Wi-Fi, etc. through one service provider. Whereas Antyodaya trains will be fully unreserved long-distance train services to be operated on dense routes.

(b) At present, routes of Tejas and Antyodaya trains have not been finalized. Moreover, Indian Railways do not introduce new trains on State-wise basis as railway network and train operations cut across State boundaries.

(c) The highest and the average speed of these trains cannot be ascertained as of now since the trains have not been introduced.

Ready-to-eat food pouches by IRCTC

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

(a) whether IRCTC is now trying out ready-to-eat food, packed in sealed airtight pouches, originally developed by DRDO for high altitude defence posts and later commercially developed by private companies;

(b) whether IRCTC has plans to manufacture its own food packets based on DRDO technical know-how at half the market cost; and

(c) whether with its adequate infrastructure, manpower and cooking expertise, IRCTC will be given exclusive catering rights in Rajdhani and Shatabdi trains?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) is in the process of manufacturing the ready-to-eat food packets on trial basis in collaboration with Defence Food Research Laboratory (DFRL) at Mysore. For this purpose, IRCTC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with DFRL for transfer of technology of Retort Pouch Processed Foods. Cost price of the package shall be substantially less than the market price, which will be determined after completion of trials.

(c) At present, no exclusive catering rights in Rajdhani and Shatabdi Express trains have been given to IRCTC. However, as announced in Rail Budget 2016-17, it has been decided that IRCTC would begin to manage catering services in a phased manner through unbundling catering services by creating a distinction between food preparation and food distribution.