

(c) if so, how Railways are managing with safety of railways with such huge vacancies;

(d) the probability of incidents/accidents on account of such huge vacancies in safety category; and

(e) the efforts being made by Railways to fill up the above vacancies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) and (b) As on 01.04.2016, there is 122763 number of vacancies in safety category on Zonal Railways out of which 8422 posts were vacant in South Central Railway.

(c) Safety in train operations, which is accorded highest priority, is ensured through appropriate manpower planning and its utilization.

(d) Safety parameters for train operations have shown continuous improvement over the years and there is no compromise on this. Accidents per million train kilometres have reduced from 01.11 in 2014-15 to 0.10 in 2015-16.

(e) Occurrence and filling up of vacancies is a continuous process and the same is filled by timely placement of indents with recruitment agencies as per operational requirements. Some of the vacancies are likely to remain unfilled at a particular period of time.

Installation of bio-toilets

2060. PROF. M. V. RAJEEV GOWDA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of railway routes or trains in the country that have been installed with bio-toilets;

(b) whether Government will make Railways discharge-free by 2019, as claimed; and

(c) if so, the details of the progress made so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) Three Railway routes/sections viz. Rameswaram - Manamadurai (114 Kms), Okha - Kanalus Junction (141 Kms), Porbandar - Wansjaliya (34 Kms) have been commissioned as 'Green Corridors' i.e. no human waste from trains gets discharged on tracks over these sections as all trains running over these routes/sections have all the coaches fitted with bio-toilets. Further, at present, there are more than 900

trains in which bio-toilets have been introduced either in all coaches or in some coaches of the trains. More and more trains are being progressively augmented with coaches fitted with bio-toilets.

(b) and (c) Indian Railways have set a target to fit bio-toilets in the entire fleet of coaches by the year 2021-22. As on 31.10.2016, more than 49,000 bio-toilets have been installed by Indian Railways in about 14,000 coaches.

Improving the quality of food in trains

†2061. SHRI MAJEED MEMON: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways have formulated any comprehensive plan for the year 2017 to improve the quality of food in trains;

(b) if so, whether it is proposed to make modern base kitchens on a large scale for the same;

(c) whether Railways, taking into consideration the quality of food prepared and served, are considering giving the contract of preparing food and serving it to different contractors; and

(d) the details of the steps being contemplated by Railways to introduce newer options to make the quality of food better?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) Yes, Sir. As announced in Railway Budget 2016-17, it has been decided that Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC) would begin to manage catering services in a phased manner.

(b) IRCTC has also been mandated to establish 10 more mechanized base kitchens in compliance of pronouncement made in the Railway Budget.

(c) It has also been decided that IRCTC would unbundle catering services by creating a distinction between food preparation and food distribution.

(d) In order to further improve the quality of the food served on Indian Railways, besides enhanced supervision and monitoring, newer options like e-catering, ready to eat food have also been introduced to provide variety of food to passengers.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.