

Deterioration of food quality and quantity in Rajdhani Express

732. SHRIMATI SHANTA CHHETRI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry is aware that reduction of food items served in Rajdhani Express plying to Eastern India and the sharp increase in railway fare since 2014 have resulted in dissatisfaction amongst the passengers;

(b) whether Government plans to take pocket-friendly measures for passengers; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) No, Sir. In terms of Catering Policy 2017, Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has been rationalizing the menu of pre-paid trains including Rajdhani trains to Eastern India where catering charges are inbuilt in the passenger fare. Under rationalization of menu, IRCTC has changed the nature of meals as per the needs of passengers. The menu is, however, commensurate with the existing tariff.

(b) and (c) It is the endeavour of Indian Railways to fix and notify tariff of catering items from time to time, taking into consideration its affordability as per the needs of travelling passengers. The tariff of standard items for Mail/Express trains and Static Units was last revised in 2012 and for all pre-paid Rajdhani/Shatabdi/Duronto trains in 2013.

Indian Railways have also taken the following pocket-friendly measures for catering:—

- (i) Introduction of Janta Meal and Standard Meal on trains and at platforms.
- (ii) Opening of Jan Aahars at railway stations (where food price is fixed from ₹ 5 to ₹ 50).
- (iii) Provision of e-Catering services at railway stations.
- (iv) Provision of variety of regional cuisines at railway stations.

Vacancies in Railways

733. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR GUPTA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a large number of vacancies in Railways;

(b) if so, the total number of employees in Railways at present as compared to 2014-15; and

(c) the steps that have been taken to fill up these vacant posts so that efficiency of Railways does not suffer?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) and (b) The vacancies of non-gazetted staff against sanctioned strength in Railways as on 01.04.2018 were 2,61,270. Total number of employees in Railways were 12,48,101 as on 01.04.2018 as compared to 13,05,449 as on 01.04.2015.

(c) Arising and filling up of vacancies is a continuous process. Railway Recruitment Boards (RRBs) are regularly providing panels of successful candidates to Railways/Production Units concerned. During the last three years, a total of 66,682 candidates (including 57,851 for safety category posts) have been empanelled for various Group 'C' posts on Indian Railways through RRBs.

Three Centralized Employment Notifications (CENs) for filling up vacancies mainly in safety categories were issued in 2018:—

- (i) CEN No.01/2018 for Asst. Loco Pilots (ALPs) and Technicians. (Total 64,371 vacancies). The 1st stage Computer Based Test has been conducted from 09.08.2018 to 04.09.2018 in multiple shifts.
- (ii) CEN No.02/2018 for 62,907 vacancies in Level-1 (erstwhile Group 'D') posts. Computer Based Test has been conducted from 17.09.2018 to 17.12.2018 in multiple shifts.
- (iii) CEN No.03/2018 has been published on 29.12.2018 for filling up of 13,487 vacancies for the posts of Junior Engineers and others. The last date for online registration was 31.01.2019.

Accidents at unmanned level crossings

734. SHRI DHIRAJ PRASAD SAHU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is taken any steps to avert accidents at unmanned level crossings; and

(b) whether Government is contemplating to install any equipment/device to avoid such incidents in the near future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) and (b) Indian Railways (IR) have been taken proactive measures to