

Re-allocation of railway officers to zonal levels

2208. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Ministry of Railways is planning on re-allocating its officers to zonal levels based on the report of the Committee headed by Bibek Debroy in 2015;

(b) the reasons for restructuring the Railway Board;

(c) the details from the eighteen zonal centres; and

(d) the measures being taken to maintain regular accountability of the Railway Board and the zonal centres?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL): (a) to (c) An exercise has recently been undertaken to rationalise the strength of senior officers in Railway Board by re-organising and re-assigning work of organised Railway Services' posts in Board's Office. As a result of this exercise, 50 posts of officers of the level of Junior Administrative Grade and above belonging to different Railway Services were identified and transferred out of Railway Board's Office for operation on Zonal Railways/Production Units/Training Institutes etc.

(d) Zonal Railways and Railway Board are assigned target for Key Performance Indicators and their performance is regularly monitored.

Improvement of facilities through privatisation

2209. SHRI C. M. RAMESH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is planning for privatisation of some prestigious superfast trains in the country, the details thereof;

(b) the areas where privatisation would help improve existing facilities in these trains for the benefit of passengers, the details thereof; and

(c) whether it would lead to retrenchment of railway employees, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL): (a) and (b) Ministry of Railways have constituted a Group of Secretaries (GoS) with a term of one year, *inter-alia*, to advise on the terms and conditions to permit private passenger train operators

to operate trains with world class technology over Indian Railways network. The GoS has, so far, held four meetings. Further modalities in this regard have not been finalized.

- (c) No, Sir. It would not lead to retrenchment.

Privatisation of trains and train routes

2210. SHRI ELAMARAM KAREEM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of routes that have been privatised so far and expected to be privatised in the near future;
- (b) the number of private trains operating at present that have received permission and those which are awaiting permission;
- (c) the criteria followed to decide the routes for privatisation; and
- (d) the manner in which the private train operations affect the normal trains?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL): (a) to (d) There is no plan for privatisation of railway routes. There is a proposal to outsource the commercial and on board services of a few trains and also to permit private players to induct modern rakes to run trains on select routes with an objective to provide improved service delivery to passengers. However, the responsibility of train operations and safety rests with Indian Railways. As of now, IRCTC, a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) of Ministry of Railways, has been permitted to operate two trains out of which one train is currently operational.

Further, Government has constituted a Group of Secretaries (GoS) to advise on the terms & conditions for private passenger train operators, which are under finalisation.

Filling up of vacant safety-related posts

2211. SHRI RITABRATA BANERJEE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Government is going to fill up safety-related vacant posts within a year;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor?