

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 763
ANSWERED ON 08.12.2023

VACANT POSITIONS IN SAFETY CATEGORIES OF RAILWAY

763. SHRI NIRANJAN BISHI:
SMT. SULATA DEO:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of vacant positions in track maintenance, track fitness, senior and junior section engineers, gangmen, and technicians in the safety category;
- (b) measure undertaken to address these vacancies and engagements with the Ministry of Finance to seek exemption from the ban on creating new positions;
- (c) whether these vacancies impact the overall functioning and safety of the railway system and the measures in place to mitigate the associated risks; and
- (d) whether any assessments have been conducted to evaluate the impact of these vacancies on passenger service quality, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF RAILWAYS, COMMUNICATIONS AND
ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)

(a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

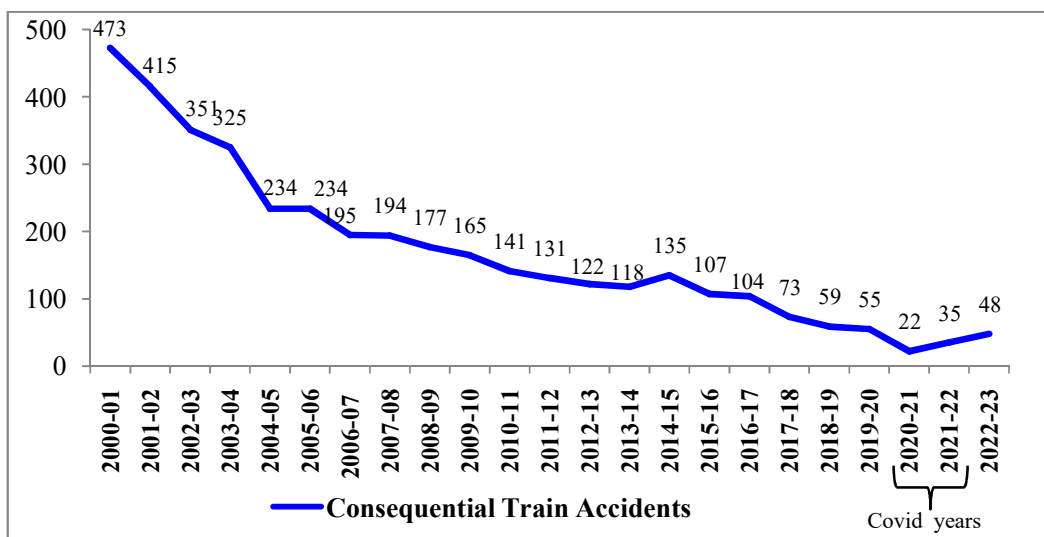
STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 763 BY SHRI NIRANJAN BISHI AND SMT. SULATA DEO ANSWERED IN RAJYA SABHA ON 08.12.2023 REGARDING VACANT POSITIONS IN SAFETY CATEGORIES OF RAILWAY

(a) to (d) : Occurrence and filling up of vacancies is a continuous process on Indian Railways considering its size, spatial distribution and criticality of operation. Adequate and suitable manpower is provided to cater to the regular operations, changes in technology, mechanisations and innovative practices. The vacancies are filled up primarily by placement of indents by Railways with Recruitment agencies as per operational and technological requirements.

2,94,115 vacancies have been filled up in the last five years and up to 30th September 2023. More than 90% of the candidates recruited are in safety and operational categories.

Ministry of Finance was approached by Railways to allow creation of posts due to increase of assets. Ministry of Finance has delegated powers to Railways to create non-gazetted revenue posts of crew, as part of crew review exercise.

In last 10 years, Indian Railways has adopted several technological and modern practices in operations and maintenance areas which have resulted in the reduction of accidents as is evident from the following graph.



Measures taken for safety of passengers and improvement in safety of the railway system are given as under:

1. Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh (RRSK) has been introduced in 2017-18 for replacement/renewal/upgradation of critical safety assets, with a corpus of Rs. 1 lakh crore for five years. From 2017-18 till 2021-22, a Gross expenditure of Rs. 1.08 lakh

crore was incurred on RRSK works. In 2022-23, the Govt. extended the currency of RRSK for another period of five years with Gross Budgetary Support (GBS) of Rs. 45,000 crores.

2. Electrical/Electronic Interlocking Systems with centralized operation of points and signals have been provided at 6498 stations upto 31.10.2023 to eliminate accident due to human failure.
3. Interlocking of Level Crossing (LC) Gates has been provided at 11137 level Crossing Gates up to 31.10.2023 for enhancing safety at LC gates.
4. Complete Track Circuiting of stations to enhance safety for verification of track occupancy by electrical means has been provided at 6548 stations upto 31.10.2023.
5. Detailed instructions on issues related with safety of Signalling e.g. mandatory correspondence check, alteration work protocol, preparation of completion drawing, etc. have been issued.
6. System of disconnection and reconnection for S&T equipment as per protocol has been re-emphasized.
7. All locomotives are equipped with Vigilance Control Devices (VCD) to ensure alertness of Loco Pilots.
8. Retro-reflective sigma boards are provided on the mast which is located two OHE masts prior to the signals in electrified territories to warn the crew about the signal ahead when visibility is low due to foggy weather.
9. A GPS based Fog Safety Device (FSD) is provided to loco pilots in fog affected areas which enables loco pilots to know the distance of the approaching landmarks like signals, level crossing gates etc.
10. Modern track structure consisting of 60kg, 90 Ultimate Tensile Strength (UTS) rails, Prestressed Concrete Sleeper (PSC) Normal/Wide base sleepers with elastic fastening, fanshaped layout turnout on PSC sleepers, Steel Channel/H-beam Sleepers on girder bridges is used while carrying out primary track renewals.
11. Mechanisation of track laying activity through use of track machines like PQRS, TRT, T-28 etc to reduce human errors.
12. Maximizing supply of 130m/260m long rail panels for increasing progress of rail renewal and avoiding welding of joints, thereby ensuring safety.
13. Laying of longer rails, minimizing the use of Alumino Thermic Welding and adoption of better welding technology for rails i.e. Flash Butt Welding.
14. Monitoring of track geometry by OMS (Oscillation Monitoring System) and TRC (Track Recording Cars).

15. Patrolling of railway tracks to look out for weld/rail fractures.
16. The use of Thick Web Switches and Weldable CMS Crossing in turnout renewal works.
17. Inspections at regular intervals are carried out to monitor and educate staff for observance of safe practices.
18. Web based online monitoring system of track assets viz. Track database and decision support system has been adopted to decide rationalized maintenance requirement and optimize inputs.
19. Detailed instructions on issues related with safety of Track e.g. integrated block, corridor block, worksite safety; monsoon precautions etc. have been issued.
20. Preventive maintenance of railway assets (Coaches & Wagons) is undertaken to ensure safe train operations and to keep a check on Rail Accidents across the country.
21. Replacement of conventional ICF design coaches with LHB design coaches is being done.
22. All unmanned level crossings (UMLCs) on Broad Gauge (BG) route have been eliminated by January 2019.
23. Safety of Railway Bridges is ensured through regular inspection of Bridges. The requirement of repair/rehabilitation of Bridges is taken up based upon the conditions assessed during these inspections.
24. Indian Railways has displayed Statutory “Fire Notices” for widespread passenger information in all coaches. Fire posters are provided in every coach so as to inform and alert passengers regarding various Do’s and Don’ts to prevent fire. These include messages regarding not carrying any inflammable material, explosives, prohibition of smoking inside the coaches, penalties etc.
25. Production Units are providing Fire detection and suppression system in newly manufactured Power Cars and Pantry Cars, Fire and Smoke detection system in newly manufactured coaches. Progressive fitment of the same in existing coaches is also underway by Zonal Railways in a phased manner.
26. Regular counselling and training of staff is undertaken.
27. Concept of Rolling Block introduced in Indian Railways (Open Lines) General Rules vide Gazette notification dated 30.11.2023, wherein work of maintenance/repair/replacement is planned for 52 weeks in advance on rolling basis and executed as per plan.

Further, to ensure enhanced passenger comfort and safety, following measures have been adopted:

1. More than 80% of the reserved tickets are booked online through Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) website and mobile app.
2. Physical tickets can be procured through Computerized Passenger Reservation System (PRS) counters of Indian Railways which are available all over India.
3. Authorized ticketing agents like e-ticketing agents of IRCTC, Yatri Ticket Suvidha Kendra (YTSK) have also been engaged for dispensing physical as well as e-tickets.
4. In case of unreserved ticketing, various modes including digital have been provided to facilitate booking of unreserved tickets like UTS counters, Automatic Ticket Vending Machines (ATVM) and UTS on Mobile app.
5. Jansadharan Ticket Booking Sewaks (JTBS), Yatri Ticket Suvidha Kendra (YTSK), Station Ticket Booking Agents (STBA) are also engaged for disbursing unreserved tickets.
6. To improve ticket checking process and make it more transparent and user friendly, Handheld Terminals (HHT) has been provided to ticket checking staff.
7. Surveillance is kept through CCTV cameras provided in 7264 coaches in trains and 866 Railway stations for enhanced security of passengers.
8. On vulnerable and identified routes/sections, trains are escorted by Railway Protection Force in addition to trains escorted by Government Railway Police of different states.
