

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS

RAJYA SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3000

ANSWERED ON 20.12.2024

QUALITY AND PRICE OF FOOD SERVED IN TRAINS AND RAILWAY STATIONS

3000. SHRI HARIS BEERAN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has taken any initiative to conduct regular inspection of the catering services in trains to maintain the quality and price of food served in trains and railway stations;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether it is a fact that many trains are running without pantry car or catering services;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) whether it is also a fact that many complaints are reported regarding catering services in running trains?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF RAILWAYS, INFORMATION & BROADCASTING AND
ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)

(a) to (e): Regular and surprise inspections are carried out by the officials of Indian Railways and IRCTC in trains and stations to check and ensure that catering services are provided as per laid down standards. It is also ensured that food items are sold at notified tariff. In addition, special Inspection Drives are also carried out with focus on aspects such as quality, price, etc. Prompt and appropriate punitive action, including imposition of fines, disciplinary action, counselling, warning etc., is taken in case of catering related complaints. Following measures have been taken for improvement in catering services over Indian Railways:

- Supply of meals from designated Base Kitchens.
- Commissioning of modern Base Kitchens at identified locations. As on 07.12.2024, a total of 611 Base Kitchens have been commissioned.
- Installation of CCTV Cameras in Base Kitchens for better monitoring of food preparation.
- Shortlisting and use of popular and branded raw materials, like cooking oil, atta, rice, pulses, masala items, paneer, dairy products etc. for food production.

- Deployment of Food Safety Supervisors at Base Kitchens to monitor food safety and hygienic practices.
- Deployment of on-board IRCTC supervisors on trains.
- Introduction of QR codes on food packets, enabling display of details like name of kitchen, date of packaging etc.
- Regular deep cleaning and periodical pest control (every 15 days) in Base Kitchens and Pantry Cars.
- In order to ensure compliance with Food Safety Norms, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) certification from designated Food Safety Officers of each catering unit has been made mandatory.
- Regular food sampling as a part of the inspection and monitoring mechanism to ensure quality of food on trains.
- Third Party Audit is done to examine hygiene and quality of food in Pantry Cars and Base Kitchens. Customer satisfaction survey is also conducted.
- Regular and surprise inspections by Railway/ IRCTC officials, including Food Safety Officers.
- Implementation of rationalised menu in trains so as to introduce items of regional cuisines/ preferences, seasonal delicacies, food items, as per the preferences of different groups of passengers, such as diabetic food, baby food, health food options including millet based local products, etc.

Attachment of pantry car in any train is based on factors such as availability of pantry cars, load limitation, journey time of the train, etc. Catering services in trains running without pantry cars are provided through Train Side Vending and Static Units at en-route stations. In addition, passengers travelling in trains can also avail of food of their choice through e-Catering services which are available at major en-route stations.
