

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2300
ANSWERED ON 08.08.2025

CLUSTER TENDERING FOR CATERING SERVICES IN RAILWAYS

2300 # SHRI DIGVIJAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) the process of cluster tendering for providing catering services in Railways;
- (b) whether one or more premium trains can be included in the same cluster under this process;
- (c) whether only a single contractor can be awarded catering contract for trains running on the same route;
- (d) if not, the number of contractors who have been awarded contracts to provide catering services for more than one premium train within a single cluster; and
- (e) whether the Railway Board has received any complaint in this regard, if so, the action taken thereon?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF RAILWAYS, INFORMATION & BROADCASTING AND
ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)

(a) to (e): With the objective of bringing about improvement in quality and hygiene of food in trains, Ministry of Railways issued instructions vide Commercial Circular No. 24 of 2023. It is envisaged to award contracts for clusters of trains in place of an individual train. Emphasis has been placed on infrastructure development and fixing end-to-end accountability of food production and services onboard. Provisions regarding formation of clusters have been detailed in the said circular which envisage one or more premium trains in a cluster. Accordingly, route-wise clusters of trains along with identified locations for commissioning of Base Kitchens for supply of meals in trains have been formed by Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC) within the framework of extant policy guidelines.

IRCTC has undertaken tendering of these clusters of trains under the framework of the extant policy guidelines. Tenders have been awarded through a transparent process to the highest bidders as per the terms and conditions stipulated in the tender documents. While finalising the

tenders, it has been ensured that at least two distinct contractors are available on a particular route. Further, robust monitoring systems and compliance measures have been put in place by IRCTC to ensure compliance of tender conditions by the contractors and prevent any unethical practices or unfair advantages to any contractor.

A total of 24 bidders participated in the tenders for clusters of trains floated by IRCTC, out of which 20 entities have been awarded contracts by IRCTC. The details of Letters of Award (LOA), issued to multiple service providers, are published on the website of IRCTC.

Receipt of representations, suggestions, grievances, complaints, etc., from stakeholders, elected representatives, catering associations, individuals, etc., by Railways at various levels is a continuous and dynamic process. These concerns are examined on merits and necessary action is taken accordingly.
