

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2326
ANSWERED ON 19.12.2025

OVERCHARGING BY RAILWAY CATERING STAFF

2326. Dr. K. Laxman :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether complaints have been received regarding overcharging by catering staff on trains, including cases of non-adherence to approved prices for food and beverages such as bottled water;
- (b) if so, the number of complaints registered during the last three years, year-wise;
- (c) the action taken against defaulting vendors, including fines, suspensions, or blacklisting; and
- (d) the steps taken by the Ministry and IRCTC to ensure compliance with approved rates and protect passengers from overcharging?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (d): Indian Railways serve about 58 cr meals every year on average. Only about 0.0008% complaints are received on average. Based on inquiry on these complaints during the last three years, a fine of Rs 2.6 cr has been imposed.

In order to take passenger feedback, the complaint management system over Indian Railways has been strengthened, simplified and made more accessible over the last few years through the introduction of RailMadad Portal. With the launch of RailMadad Portal, Indian Railways provided passengers a single window system to register complaints and suggestions.

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Indian Railways continuously endeavour to make available food items to the travelling passengers as per the prescribed rates. Necessary steps are accordingly taken by Indian Railways from time to time to ensure the same. Following steps have been taken by Railways to curb overcharging in trains :

1. SMS is sent to passengers with a link of menu and tariff to make them aware of rates.
2. Installation of Point of Sale (POS) machines for billing and cashless payments.
3. Conducting awareness campaigns to promote billing and curb overcharging.
4. Rates stickers on Packaged Drinking Water (PDW) Buckets and Tea/Coffee urns.
5. Introduction of e-pantry service in Mail/Express trains to facilitate passengers to book meals through an online module.
6. Implementation of QR code enabled Identity Cards to onboard catering staff.
7. Distribution of pamphlets to create awareness regarding the rate of catering items and Packaged Drinking Water bottles.
8. Special Inspection Drives to check overcharging and billing issues.
9. Imposition of suitable penalty in cases of overcharging, if any.
