

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2523**  
**ANSWERED ON 13.03.2026**

**COMPLAINTS RELATING TO CATERING SERVICES IN RAILWAYS**

2523 MS. SWATI MALIWAL:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of complaints received during last five years relating to catering services - regarding quality, hygiene and pricing of food served on trains and at railway stations, year-wise and zone-wise;
- (b) the number of penalties imposed, contracts terminated or contractors blacklisted, including those operating under IRCTC, for violations of quality and safety standards;
- (c) whether periodic third-party food safety audits, surprise inspections and laboratory testing of food samples are conducted, if so, the details thereof, year-wise and zone-wise; and
- (d) the steps taken to ensure standardisation of pricing, quality control mechanisms and real-time grievance redressal for passengers?

**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. About only 0.0008% complaints are received on average. Based on inquiry on these complaints during the last five years, a fine of Rs 5.8 cr has been imposed.

IRCTC and Railway officials conduct surprise and periodic checks to ensure compliance with catering standards on trains. IRCTC has deployed supervisors and catering assistants for ongoing monitoring of onboard services and real-time resolution of passengers grievances. To enhance inspection coverage, IRCTC has engaged additional Hospitality Monitors for sectional oversight of catering services on mail express trains.

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. The following measures have been taken to improve quality, hygiene, and food safety:

- Supply of meals from designated Base Kitchens.
- Commissioning of modern Base Kitchens at identified locations.
- Installation of CCTV Cameras in Base Kitchens for better monitoring of food preparation.

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- 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 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.
- Regular training is conducted by IRCTC to enhance the skills of catering staff, focusing on customer service areas i.e., communication, courteous behaviour, service standards, personal grooming, and hygiene.

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

In case any passenger complaint related to food quality in trains is reported, prompt and appropriate punitive action is taken against the service providers for deficiency in service.

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