

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 909
ANSWERED ON 06.02.2026

SAFETY AND TRAINING OF CONTRACTUAL WORKERS IN RAILWAYS

909 SHRI RAGHAV CHADHA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government maintains data on the engagement of regular and contractual workers in railway operations and services, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the details on the number of accidents or safety incidents involving contractual workers in railway operations in the last five years, State-wise and year-wise;
- (c) the steps being taken by Government to ensure safety, training and welfare of contractual railway workers; and
- (d) the outcomes that have been achieved by Government in maintaining service quality and worker safety across outsourced operations, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)

(a) to (d) Occurrence and filling up of vacancies are continuous processes 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.

Presently, recruitment against 1,43,086 vacancies of non-gazetted personnel has been taken up on Indian Railways as per Annual Calendar 2024 and 2025.

During January to December 2024, ten Centralized Employment Notifications (CENs) for 92,116 vacancies were notified for filling up of posts of Assistant Loco Pilots (ALPs), Technicians, Sub-Inspectors, Constables in Railway Protection Force (RPF), Junior Engineers (JEs)/ Depot Material Superintendent (DMS)/ Chemical & Metallurgical Assistant (CMA), Paramedical Categories, Non-Technical Popular Categories (Graduate), Non-Technical Popular Categories (Under-Graduate), Ministerial & Isolated Categories and Level-1 categories such as Assistants, Track Maintainers and Pointsman.

First stage/Single stage Computer Based Tests (CBTs) for 59,678 posts has been completed. Details are as under:-

Exam	Candidates	Cities	Languages
1 st Stage CBT for the post of ALP (18,799 vacancies)	18,40,347	156	15
CBT for the post of Technician (14,298 vacancies)	26,99,892	139	15
1 st Stage CBT for the post of JE/DMS/CMA (7,951 vacancies)	11,01,266	146	15
CBT for the post of RPF-SI (452 vacancies)	15,35,635	143	15
CBT for the post of RPF-Constable (4,208 vacancies)	45,30,288	147	15
CBT for Paramedical Categories (1,376 vacancies)	7,08,321	143	15
1 st Stage CBT for Non-Technical Popular Categories (Graduate) (8,113 vacancies)	58,41,774	141	15
1 st Stage CBT for Non-Technical Popular Categories (Under Graduate) (3,445 vacancies)	63,27,473	157	15
CBT for Ministerial & Isolated categories (1,036 vacancies)	4,46,013	139	15
Total Candidates	2,50,31,009		

2nd stage CBTs for the posts of ALP, JE/DMS/CMA and Non-Technical Popular Categories (Graduate & Under-Graduate) have also been completed. Details are as under: -

Exam	Candidates	Cities	Languages
2 nd Stage CBT for the post of ALP (18,799 vacancies)	2,66,363	112	15
2 nd Stage CBT for the post of JE/DMS/CMA (7,951 vacancies)	1,17,339	118	15
2 nd Stage CBT for Non-Technical Popular Categories (Graduate) (8,113 vacancies)	1,21,931	129	15
2 nd Stage CBT for Non-Technical Popular Categories (Under-Graduate) (3445 vacancies)	51,978	79	15
Total Candidates	5,57,611		

Computer Based Aptitude Test (CBAT) for the post of ALP and Non-Technical Popular Categories (Graduate) and Computer based Skill Test for the post of Non-Technical Popular Categories (Graduate-level) and Ministerial & Isolated Categories have also been completed. Details are as under:-

Exam	Candidates	Cities	Languages
CBAT for the post of ALP (18,799 vacancies)	1,32,044	84	2
Translation Test for Ministerial and Isolated Categories	1,233	8	2
CBAT for the post of Non-Technical Popular Categories (Graduate)	13,616	38	2
Computer Based Typing Skill Test (CBTST) for the post of Non-Technical Popular Categories (Graduate-level)	30,341	58	2
Total Candidates	1,77,234		

CBT for 32,438 vacancies for level -1 categories has commenced from 27.11.2025 in 140 cities in 15 languages. Physical efficiency Test (PET) for 4,208 vacancies of Constable (RPF) has been completed on 06.12.2025.

Panels for more than 34,000 candidates for various posts including the posts of Technicians, Junior Engineers, Paramedical Categories, Sub-Inspectors (RPF) and Assistant Loco Pilots have been finalised. Majority of them are in safety categories.

In addition, as per Annual Calendar for the year 2025, nine Centralized Employment Notifications (CENs) for 50,970 vacancies have also been issued. Details are as under:-

CEN No.	Post Name	No. of Vacancies notified	Month of Notification
01/2025	Assistant Loco Pilots	9,970	March 2025
02/2025	Technician	6,238	June 2025
03/2025	Paramedical categories	434	July 2025
04/2025	Section Controller	368	August 2025
05/2025	Junior Engineer/ Depot Material Superintendent	2,585	October 2025
06/2025	Non-Technical Popular Categories (Graduate)	5,810	October 2025
07/2025	Non-Technical Popular Categories (Under-Graduate)	3,058	October 2025
08/2025	Isolated Categories	312	December 2025
09/2025	Level-1	22,195	December 2025

The RRB examinations are quite technical in nature entailing large scale mobilization of men and resources and training of manpower. Railway overcame all these challenges and successfully conducted the recruitment in a transparent manner following all laid down guidelines. No instance of paper leakage or similar malpractice has occurred during the entire process.

Recruitment done in Indian Railways during 2004-05 to 2013-14 vis-à-vis during 2014-15 to 2024-25 is given as under:-

Period	Recruitments
2004-05 to 2013-14	4.11 lakh
2014-15 to 2024- 25	5.08 lakh
2025-26 (till date)	34,929

Further, as system improvement, the Ministry of Railways has introduced a system of publishing the annual calendar from 2024 for recruitment to various categories of Group ‘C’ posts. The introduction of the annual calendar is benefitting the aspirants in the following manner:

- More opportunities for candidates;
- Opportunities to those becoming eligible every year;
- Certainty of exams;
- Faster Recruitment process, Training and Appointments

In exigencies of work, contractual engagement/outsourcing is resorted to as a stop-gap arrangement till regular incumbents join the posts. Such contractual engagement/outsourcing is purely temporary and time-bound, and is undertaken only to ensure smooth functioning of Railway operations until posts are filled through regular selections as per extant rules and procedures.

Safety

As a consequence of various safety measures taken over the years, there has been a steep decline in the number of accidents. Number of Consequential Train Accidents has reduced as shown in the table below: -

Year	Consequential Accidents
2014-15	135
2025-26 (Till date)	12 (90% lesser)

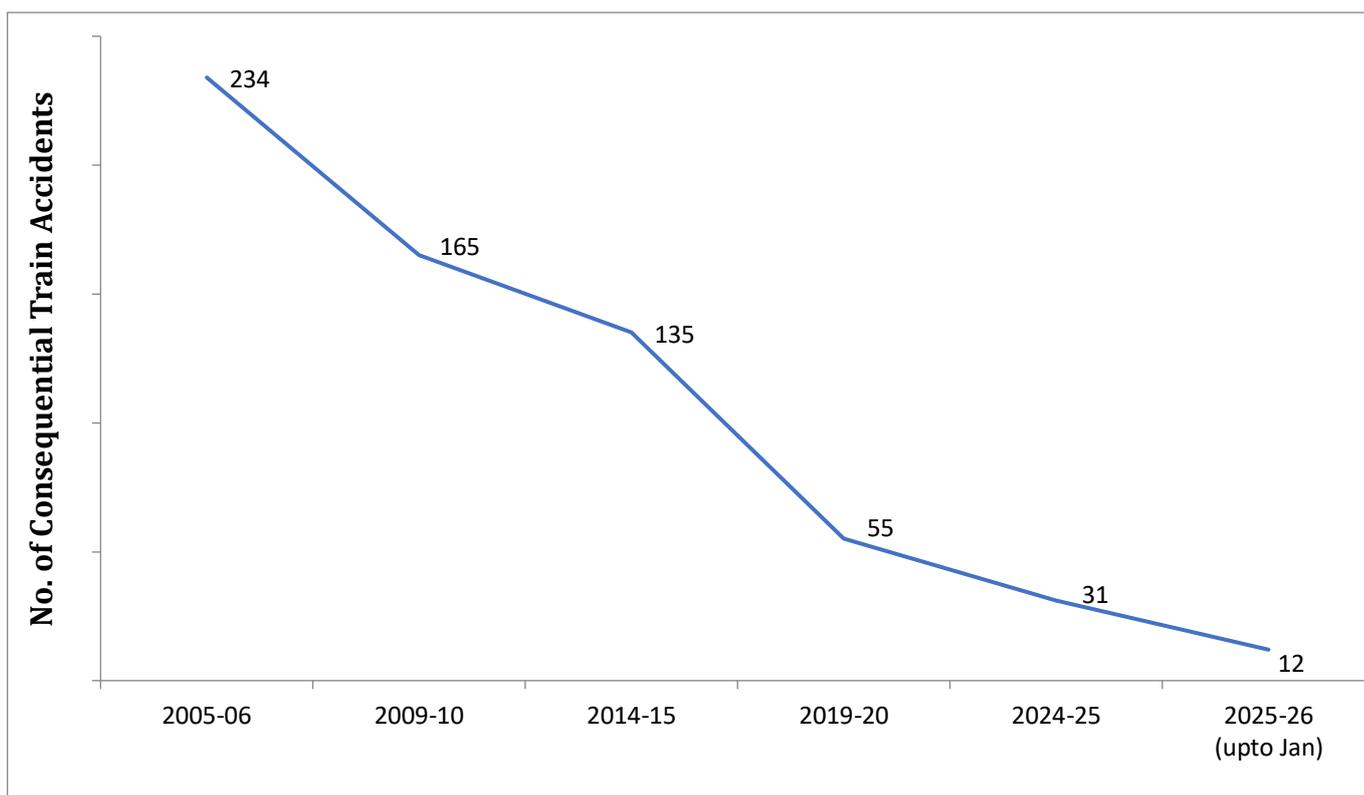
Another important index showing improvement in safety in train operations is Consequential Accidents Index, the details of which are as under: -

Consequential Accident Index:-

Year	Accident Index
2014-15	0.11
2024-25	0.03 (73% lesser)

This index measures number of consequential accidents as a ratio of total running Kilometers of all trains.

$$\text{Accident Index} = \frac{\text{No. of consequential accidents}}{\text{No. of trains X million kilometers run}}$$



Safety is accorded the highest priority on Indian Railways. The various safety measures taken to enhance safety in train operations are as under: -

- (1) On Indian Railways, the expenditure on Safety related activities has increased over the years as under: -

Expenditure/Budget on Safety related activities (Rs. in Cr.)				
2013-14	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
39,200	87,336	1,01,662	1,14,022	1,17,693

- (2) Electrical/Electronic Interlocking Systems with centralized operation of points and signals have been provided at 6,660 stations up to 31.12.2025 to reduce accidents due to human failure.
- (3) Interlocking of Level Crossing (LC) Gates has been provided at 10,037 Level Crossing Gates up to 31.12.2025 for enhancing safety at LC Gates.
- (4) Complete Track Circuiting of stations to enhance safety by verification of track occupancy by electrical means has been provided at 6,665 stations up to 31.12.2025.
- (5) Kavach is a highly technology intensive system, which requires safety certification of highest order. Kavach was adopted as a National ATP system in July 2020. Based on deployment of Kavach version 3.2 on 1465 Rkm on South Central Railway and experience gained, further improvements were made. Finally, Kavach specification version 4.0 was approved by RDSO on 16.07.2024.

After extensive and elaborate trials, Kavach Version 4.0 has been successfully commissioned on 1297 Route Kilometres, covering the high density Delhi - Mumbai and Delhi - Howrah routes. On the Delhi - Mumbai route Kavach ver 4.0 has been commissioned on Junction cabin - Palwal - Mathura - Nagda section (667 Rkm) & Ahmedabad - Vadodara - Virar section (432 Rkm) and on the Delhi - Howrah route on Gaya – Sarmatanr (93 Rkm) and Bardhaman - Howrah section (105 Rkm).

- (6) 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.
- (7) System of disconnection and reconnection for S&T equipment as per protocol has been re-emphasized.
- (8) All locomotives are equipped with Vigilance Control Devices (VCD) to improve alertness of Loco Pilots.
- (9) Retro-reflective sigma boards are provided on the mast which is located two OHE masts prior to the signals in electrified territories to alert the crew about the signal ahead when visibility is low due to foggy weather.
- (10) 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.

- (11) Modern track structure consisting of 60kg, 90 Ultimate Tensile Strength (UTS) rails, Prestressed Concrete Sleeper (PSC) Normal/Wide base sleepers with elastic fastening, fan shaped layout turnout on PSC sleepers, Steel Channel/H-beam Sleepers on girder bridges is used while carrying out primary track renewals.
- (12) Mechanisation of track laying activity through use of track machines like PQRS, TRT, T-28 etc. to reduce human errors.
- (13) Maximizing supply of 130m/260m long rail panels for increasing progress of rail renewal and avoiding welding of joints, thereby improving safety.
- (14) Ultrasonic Flaw Detection (USFD) testing of rails to detect flaws and timely removal of defective rails.
- (15) Laying of longer rails, minimizing the use of Alumino Thermic Welding and adoption of better welding technology for rails i.e., Flash Butt Welding.
- (16) Monitoring of track geometry by OMS (Oscillation Monitoring System) and TRC (Track Recording Cars).
- (17) Patrolling of railway tracks to look out for weld/rail fractures.
- (18) The use of Thick Web Switches and Weldable CMS Crossing in turnout renewal works.
- (19) Inspections at regular intervals are carried out to monitor and educate staff for observance of safe practices.
- (20) 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.
- (21) Detailed instructions on issues related with safety of Track, e.g. integrated block, corridor block, worksite safety, monsoon precautions, etc. have been issued.
- (22) Preventive maintenance of railway assets (Coaches & Wagons) is undertaken to ensure safe train operations.
- (23) Replacement of conventional ICF design coaches with LHB design coaches is being done.
- (24) All unmanned level crossings (UMLCs) on Broad Gauge (BG) route have been eliminated by January 2019.
- (25) 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.
- (26) Indian Railways has displayed Statutory “Fire Notices” for widespread passenger information in all coaches. Fire posters are provided in every coach so as to educate 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.

- (27) 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.
- (28) Regular counselling and training of staff is undertaken.
- (29) Concept of Rolling Block introduced in Indian Railways (Open Lines) General Rules vide Gazette notification dated 30.11.2023, wherein work of integrated maintenance/repair/replacement of assets is planned up to 52 weeks in advance on rolling basis and executed as per plan.

The details of the Safety related works related to better maintenance practices, Technological improvements, better infrastructure and rolling stock etc. undertaken by Railways are tabulated below:-

S.N.	Item	2004-05 to 2013-14	2014-15 to 2024-25	2014-25 Vs. 2004-14
Technological Improvements				
1.	Use of high-quality rails (60 Kg) (Km)	57,450 Km	1.43 Lakh Km	More than 2 times
2.	Longer Rail Panels (260m) (Km)	9,917 Km	77,522 Km	Nearly 8 times
3.	Electronic Interlocking (Stations)	837 Stations	3,691 Stations	More than 4 times
4.	Fog Pass Safety Devices (Nos.)	As on 31.03.14: 90 Nos.	As on 31.03.25: 25,939 Nos.	288 times
5.	Thick Web Switches (Nos.)	Nil	28,301 Nos.	
Better Maintenance Practices				
1.	Primary Rail Renewal (Track Km)	32,260 Km	49,941 Km	1.5 times
2.	USFD (Ultra Sonic Flaw detection) Testing of Welds (Nos.)	79.43 Lakh	2 Crore	More than 2 times
3.	Weld failures (Nos.)	In 2013-14: 3699 Nos.	In 2024-25: 370 Nos.	90 % reduction

4.	Rail fractures (Nos.)	In 2013-14: 2548 Nos.	In 2024-25: 289 Nos.	More than 88% reduction
Better Infrastructure and Rolling Stock				
1.	New Track KM added (Track Km)	14,985 Km	34,428 Km	More than 2 times
2.	Flyovers (RoBs)/Underpasses (RUBs) (Nos.)	4,148 Nos.	13,808 Nos.	More than 3 times
3.	Unmanned Level crossings (Nos.) on BG	As on 31.03.14: 8,948	As on 31.03.24:Nil (All eliminated by 31.01.19)	Removed
4.	Manufacture of LHB Coaches (Nos.)	2,337 Nos.	42,677	More than 18 times

Indian Railways (IR) executes a wide range of works for creation, repair and maintenance of its various assets including stations, coaches, wagons, coaching depots, locomotives, tracks, etc., pertaining to various departments namely Mechanical, Commercial, Electrical, Civil Engineering, Signal & Telecommunication, Medical, etc. These works are executed through its own workers and/or through outsourcing. Outsourcing is done by Railways on need basis from time to time in order to improve the services and efficiency in operation, and the number of works being done through outsourcing varies from time to time according to requirement.

Railways, as Principal Employer, ensures that the outsourced workers are provided facilities by the agencies as per provisions of Labour Laws and ensures compliance with the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1970, and minimum wages notified by the Central/State Governments under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, and EPF & MP Act, 1952. Compliance of the statutory provisions is ensured through conditions incorporated in the agreements made by the Railways. Suitable guidelines are available for dealing with the cases of violation of the above laws, if any, in accordance with the extant laws and guidelines.

The agency workers and their families are granted treatment in railway hospitals and dispensaries as per the extant provisions.

All the outsourced workers are covered under Employees' State Insurance/Employees' Compensation Act, insurance policy, provident fund and other Social Security benefits admissible under Central Labour Acts.
