

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 337
TO BE ANSWERED ON 24.07.2024**

LOCO PILOTS OF SOUTHERN RAILWAYS

337 SHRI V K SREEKANDAN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that loco pilots of Southern Railway have been protesting against the increasing workload and stress;

(b) if so, whether Loco pilots demanding to implement periodical rest as per the rule and if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that due to a large number of loco pilot posts remained vacant for a long time, the existing loco pilots are being put to work extra time;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether it is a fact that putting the loco pilots for extra hours of duty is a matter of concern towards safety of train operations; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)

(a) to (f): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (f) OF UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.337 BY SHRI V K SREEKANDAN TO BE ANSWERED IN LOK SABHA ON 24.07.2024 REGARDING LOCO PILOTS OF SOUTHERN RAILWAYS

(a) to (f): Occurrence and filling up of vacancies are continuous process 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, mechanizations and innovative practices. The vacancies are filled up primarily by placement of indents by Railways with Recruitment agencies as per operational and technological requirements.

After easing of restrictions imposed on account of COVID 19, two major examinations involving more than 2.37 crore candidates have been conducted successfully.

Computer Based Test (CBT) exam for more than 1.26 crore candidates was conducted in 7 phases from 28.12.2020 to 31.07.2021 in 133 shifts in 68 days across 211 cities and 726 centres.

Similarly, CBT was conducted for more than 1.1 crore candidates in 5 phases from 17.08.2022 to 11.10.2022 in 99 shifts in 33 days across 191 cities and 551 centres.

Based on these exams, 1,30,581 candidates have been recruited in Railways.

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 2004-2014 vis-à-vis during 2014-2024 is given as under :-

Period	Recruitments
2004-14	4.11 lakh
2014-24	5.02 lakh

Further, as system improvement, the Ministry of Railways has introduced a system of publishing annual calendar this year for recruitment to various categories of Group 'C' post. Accordingly, four Centralized Notifications (CENs) for 32,603 vacancies have been notified during January to March 2024 for filling up of posts of Assistant Loco Pilots, Technicians, Sub-Inspectors & Constables in Railway Protection Force (RPF). The introduction of annual calendar will benefit 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**

Duty hours of Loco Pilots and Assistant Loco Pilots are governed by Railway servants (Hours of Work & Period of Rest) Rules 2005. Duty hours, numbers of night duties, facility for out-station rest, number and hours of rest at headquarter are well defined and monitored closely.

Several steps have been taken for improvement of working condition of loco running crew and initiatives taken for improvement in safety of train operation which are as follows:

(1) Improvement in locomotives for the comfort and for easing out duties of loco running staff :-

Considering the tough duties of loco running staff, number of steps have been initiated and executed which are as under:

- a. Production of three phase locos, having ergonomic crew friendly design features like better seat and drivers desk for better comfort of loco and assistant loco pilot, has been increased in past 10 years i.e. since 2014, 7,286 three phase locos have been manufactured as against 719 prior to 2014.**
- b. All new locos manufactured are provided with air-conditioned cabs since 2017-18. So far more than 7,000 locos have been provided with air conditioners.**
- c. All new locos being manufactured are provided with Vigilance Control Devices (VCD) as a technological aid to monitor and warn Loco Pilots in case of loss of alertness while driving. Since 2014, VCD has been provided in more than 12,000 (10,521 Electric +1,873 Diesel) locos.**
- d. A portable GPS based Fog safe Device (FSD) is being provided to Loco Pilots as a technical aid for displaying and announcing the name and distance of approaching signals and important landmarks. Since 2014, 21,742 nos. FSDs have been provided in IR.**
- e. Retro-reflective strip in sigma shape have been provided two masts prior to stop signals on all the Zonal Railways for easy identification of stop signal during foggy weather as an aid and for reducing stress on loco pilots.**

(2) Improvement in quality of rest of running staff at Running Rooms :-

A number of steps have been taken in the last 10 years to improve the quality of rest of the running staff which are as under :

- a. **All 558 running rooms have been air-conditioned.**
- b. **Running staff are also provided with Yoga and meditation room, reading room with newspaper and magazines for relaxing in accordance with their requirements.**
- c. **Provision for good quality subsidized meal in running rooms.**
- d. **Availability of RO water filters in running rooms.**
- e. **Separate room for female crew.**
- f. **Loco pilots have to keep a continuous watch on track and signals involving long hours of standing in cab. Based on CAMTECH report, facilities like foot massager etc. are made available in running rooms for giving loco pilots proper rest.**

(3) Other technological aids for improving safety in train operation :-

- a. **Simulator based training for improving the driving skills and the reaction time of Loco Pilots is being emphasized and simulator training facility is increased significantly.**
- b. **Mobile Application named 'Chalak Dal' has been developed for the facilitation of crew. The App has been modified in 2023, to enable crew to access all his details related to running duties, sign on / sign off, loco trouble shooting directory and other documents required during train operation which otherwise were required to be carried in hard copy.**

(4) Other measures for improving safety in train operation :-

- a. **Various safety drives & special counselling programs are regularly organized for checking the alertness and safety awareness among the running staff. Special safety seminars & meetings are also organized for interaction with family**

members of running staff for educating on role of quality rest in life of running staff.

- b. Special drives are launched regularly to counsel running staff to boost their morale and confidence.**
