

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS**

**LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 378
TO BE ANSWERED ON 26.03.2025**

CONTRACTS FOR CLUSTERS ALLOTTED BY IRCTC

†*378. SHRI SANJAY HARIBHAU JADHAV:

**SHRI OMPRAKASH BHUPALSINH ALIAS PAVAN
RAJENIMBALKAR:**

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of all complaints filed by MPs, MLAs and Ministers and public representatives against corruption in the contracts for Clusters allotted by IRCTC;**
- (b) whether any inquiry has been conducted in this regard and if so, the details thereof;**
- (c) whether the Government has taken note of the said complaints;**
- (d) if so, the details of the authorities/persons found guilty in this regard along with the action taken by the Government thereon;**
- (e) the criteria fixed for allotment of important contracts of Cluster 'A' by IRCTC;**
- (f) whether important contracts of Cluster 'A' has been allotted by IRCTC to only one family and if so, the reasons therefor;**
- (g) whether any criminal cases are pending in the court in this regard and if so, the time since when; and**
- (h) the steps taken for early hearing in the said cases?**

ANSWER

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

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (h) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 378 TO BE ANSWERED ON 26.03.2025.

(a) to (h): On an average, 16 lakh meals are served per day on the Indian Railways' network. It is the endeavour of Indian Railways to ensure smooth and uninterrupted services of such a large volume of meals to passengers. Further, necessary measures are put in place from time to time to improve overall services to passengers.

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. These instructions stipulate supply of meals in trains only from designated base kitchens, mapping of trains with service locations and formation of route-wise clusters of trains along with identified locations for commissioning of Base Kitchens, putting in place adequate logistics, service infrastructure and deployment of trained manpower. 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.

Accordingly, as mandated, the Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC) has undertaken tendering of these clusters of trains under the framework of the extant policy guidelines. Contracts have been awarded through two packet e-open tender to the highest bidders, who fulfil the eligibility criteria defined in the aforementioned Commercial Circular. Following the due process of tendering, IRCTC has awarded contracts of 168 clusters for which a total of 653 bids were received. Clusters are in two groups i.e., 'Cluster A', comprising premium prepaid trains and Mail/Express trains with pantry cars and

‘Cluster B’, comprising Mail/Express trains with Pantry Cars and trains with train side vending (TSV).

Designated base kitchens are a single point source of supply of meals to the trains. Base kitchens are equipped with standardized kitchen equipment. These base kitchens ensure sourcing of high-quality raw material, packaging material and proper inventory management. As on 15.03.2025, a total of 717 base kitchens have been commissioned across the country.

Total 17 civil cases have been registered against the cluster based tendering in various High Courts. Out of which 14 cases have been dismissed in favour of Indian Railways/IRCTC. Further 3 cases are pending for hearing.

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.
