

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1637
TO BE ANSWERED ON 30.07.2025**

ACTION AGAINST RAILWAY CATERING CONTRACTORS

1637. SHRI HIBI EDEN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has reviewed contracts of catering firms who have been found violating health standards especially in zones like Southern Railway, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(b) whether the Government has details of firms providing catering services in trains and the number of complaints received against these firms during the last five years, zone-wise;

(c) whether the catering unit at Kadavanthra in Kochi who has been found serving unhygienic and stale food to railway passengers, has been blacklisted/penalised by the authorities, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the Government proposes to consider empaneling community-run initiatives like Kudumbashree's Samrudhi network of Kochi Municipal Corporation to supply food on trains, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) whether any guidelines have been issued recently to improve the quality, hygiene and safety of food on Railways, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor ?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (e): Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC) regularly floats tenders to select licensees for provision of onboard catering services in trains, as mandated under the extant policy. These

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licenses are awarded through a transparent process, as per the terms and conditions stipulated in the tender documents. Performance review of catering contractors is an ongoing process, which is done by IRCTC from time to time. Corrective action is accordingly taken in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract.

The base kitchen at Kochi was inspected by a committee of three officers from Railways and IRCTC, following which a penalty of Rs.1,00,000/- was imposed and the base kitchen has been closed.

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.
- 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.**
- **Pilot testing with Kudumbashree Samrudhi has also been carried out.**
