

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 536
TO BE ANSWERED ON 01.04.2026**

**COMPLAINTS REGARDING FOOD QUALITY AND CATERING SERVICE IN
TRAINS**

**†*536. SHRI SANJAY HARIBHAU JADHAV:
SHRI ARVIND GANPAT SAWANT:**

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the number of complaints lodged by passengers regarding poor quality of food in trains during the last two years, location and rail-wise;**
- (b) whether regular complaints are being received about insects, cockroaches and poor taste of the food served in Mail, Superfast and Vade Bharat Express trains;**
- (c) if so, the reasons for lack of cleanliness and quality control despite high ticket prices and catering charges;**
- (d) whether the Government has received reports of stale food (such as Papad-like hard rotis and day-old dal/paneer) being served on popular routes and if so, the details thereof;**
- (e) the number of catering contractors penalised, blacklisted/issued notices during the last financial year as a result of the recurring complaints;**
- (f) whether the Government has taken any steps to improve the quality of food supplied to on board passengers especially in the Vande Bharat and Shatabdi trains and if so, the details thereof;**
- (g) whether the Government has received any plea for the supply and serving of Southern Indian food in trains especially in Southern Railway and if so, the details thereof; and**

(h) whether the Government has commissioned modern base kitchens and introduce QR codes on food packets showing details like name of kitchen, date of packaging etc. and if so, the details thereof?

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 STARRED QUESTION NO.536 TO BE ANSWERED ON 01.04.2026 IN LOK SABHA

(a) to (h): Indian Railways serve about 58 cr meals every year on average in trains and on an average about 0.0008% complaints are received. Based on inquiry on these complaints during the last three years, a fine of Rs 2.6 cr has been imposed.

Passenger complaints related to quality and hygiene in trains are handled by IRCTC promptly and appropriate punitive action is taken against the service providers for deficiency in service as per contract agreement. IRCTC publishes the debarment list on its official website.

Indian Railways continuously endeavour to provide good quality and hygienic food items to the travelling passengers as per the prescribed norms. 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.**
- 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 meal packets supplied in trains to enhance food safety, transparency and passenger awareness. The QR code provides complete PLM (Packing, Labelling and Marking) information**

including Maximum Retail Price (MRP), date and time of packing, name of the licensee and FSSAI license number, enabling passengers to verify food details easily

- **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.**

Following measures have been taken to improve onboard cleanliness:

- **Mechanized Coach Cleaning is undertaken during primary maintenance.**
- **On-Board Housekeeping Services (OBHS) are provided for en-route cleaning and grievance redressal.**
- **Clean Train Station (CTS) services ensure mechanized cleaning of coaches, including toilets, during scheduled stoppages.**
- **Engagement of professional and technology-enabled service providers for sustained improvements in cleanliness and passenger services.**
- **All passenger coaches have been installed with bio-toilets so that no human waste is discharged from coaches on the track resulting in improved cleanliness level. The details of provision of bio toilets are as under:**

Period	Number of Bio-Toilet fitted
2004-2014	9,587
2014- Till February 2026	3,66,250

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

Based on feedback received from the stakeholders from time to time, IRCTC has introduced regional cuisines to offer a personalised experience to passengers of different regions. Several regional and local dishes from the southern part of India have been introduced in trains. The details are as under:

S. No.	States	Cuisine items
1	Tamil Nadu	Set Dosai, Palkatti Chettinad, Tomato Paruppu Kootu, Payasam, Chettinad Potato & Patani Curry
2	Karnataka	Medu Vada
3	Kerala	Kerala Chicken curry, Malabar Chicken Biryani, Payasam, Banana Kalan, Allepey Veg Curry, Kadala Curry
4	Andhra Pradesh	Idly, Vada, Dosa, Pesarattu upma, Curd rice/Pulihora
5	Telangana	Dry Veg Donda groundnut fry, Senagapappu Vankaya Kooru
6	Puducherry	Semiya upma, poriyal/kootu, Tamarind Rice
