

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
RAILWAYS  
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:54  
ANSWERED ON:20.02.2003  
RESPONSIBILITY FIXED FOR RAIL ACCIDENTS  
BASUDEB ACHARIA

**Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the Government have fixed responsibility on any railway general managers and divisional railway managers for any accident under their area;
- (b) if so, the details of the guidelines laid down for enforcing safety norms with clear-cut responsibility;
- (c) whether for enforcing safety measures, the financial powers of General Managers of zonal railways have been increased from Rs.2 crore to Rs.10 crore;
- (d) if so, whether the spurt in railway accidents is due to lack of financial powers of General Managers of zonal railways;
- (e) whether it is a fact that accidents occur due to the huge backlog in maintenance and renewal of tracks, bridges, rolling stock and also lack of modernisation of signalling system ; and
- (f) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR)

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (f) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.54 ASKED BY SH BASUDEB ACHARIA AND SHRIMAT SHYAMA SINGH, TO BE ANSWERED ON 20-02-2003 REGARDING RESPONSIBILITY FIXED FOR RAIL ACCIDENTS

(a)&(b): Each accident is inquired into. The inquiry establishes the cause and the responsibility. Primary, secondary and blameworthy responsibility are fixed as brought out in the inquiry reports for lapses committed by individuals or officials immediately controlling the functional units. Safety norms include maintenance practices and standards, observance of rules and guidelines. Violation of any of these rules are identified and responsibility fixed accordingly. Stringent punishments are imposed on the officials held responsible. Such punishments include removal and dismissal from service. Responsibility is also fixed up at higher levels in case of continued system failure, depending upon the severity of lapses. During 2001-2002, two Divisional Railway Managers were held blameworthy for an accident.

(c)&(d): There has been no spurt in train accidents. The number of consequential train accidents have in fact come down from 473 during the year 2000-2001, to 414 during the year 2001-2002 and 304 during the current year 2002-2003 (April 2002 – January 2003) (Figures are provisional). However, in order to further improve safety by expediting completion of safety related works, the financial powers of General Managers of Zonal Railways have been enhanced. Safety related works in Plan Heads "Bridge Works", Signalling and Telecommunication' and 'Track Renewals' can now be sanctioned by General managers upto Rs.50 lakhs per item, as compared to Rs.30 lakhs per item earlier. The annual financial ceiling has also been increased from Rs.6 crores to Rs.10 crores per annum.

(e)&(f): No, Sir. Maintenance of assets like track, rolling stock, and signalling gears etc. is a continuous process and, normally, there is no accumulation of maintenance backlog. In order to clear the backlog of replacement of overaged assets (as on 01.04.2001) within a fixed time frame of 6 years, a non-lapsable "Special Railway Safety Fund" of Rs.17000 crores has been created from October 2001. In case of arrears in maintenance or replacement of an asset, the speed of operation is suitably reduced along with other safety precautions so that safety is not jeopardized in any manner.