

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RAILWAYS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2492
ANSWERED ON:06.02.2014
EXPERT COMMITTEE TO REVIEW RAILWAY SAFETY
Pathak Shri Harin;Sugavanam Shri E.G.

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps taken by Railways on the recommendation of the Expert Committee reviewing railway safety to discontinue toilets discharging contents directly on tracks in all of the 43,000 coaches in the period of five years;
- (b) whether direct human discharge on rail tracks result-in corrosion/dangerous health hazards culminating in refusal by railway men in work relating to maintenance of tracks and coaches;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the reaction thereto;
- (d) the present status of installation of bio-toilets in selected mail/passenger trains;and
- (e) whether this facility is proposed to be extended in all trains and if so, the details thereof and likely date of completion?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY)

(a) In order to comply with the recommendations of the Expert Committee reviewing railway safety to discontinue direct discharge toilets, the Production Units of Indian Railways (IR) have been geared up to increase the manufacturing of coaches fitted with IR-DRDO (Defence Research & Development Organisation) bio-toilets. Further, major workshops that undertake Mid-life rehabilitation of passenger coaches have also been geared up to increase the number of in-service passenger coaches that shall be retro-fitted with IR-DRDO bio-toilets.

Retro-fitment of bio-toilets on existing old coaches is a technologically difficult and challenging work as it requires precision, specialized welding and very close supervision since any failure may have adverse repercussion on safety of train. A joint working group has been constituted consisting of expert officers from designing field, production units, zonal railways and DRDO to monitor and resolve various technical issues and to expedite the pace of fitment.

(b) & (c) Yes, Madam. Direct human discharge on rail tracks does result in corrosion of Rails and is a health hazard/risk to human health mainly due to breeding of disease carriers such as flies and rodents. Some examples of diseases caused are:

1. Parasitic - Amoebiasis and Giardiasis

2. Bacterial - Cholera, Salmonellosis and Gastroenteritis

3. Viral - Hepatitis, Poliomyelitis and Gastroenteritis etc.

Track maintainers carry out maintenance work on such tracks with lot of reluctance. However, there is no case of refusal by railwaymen for maintenance of coaches in the last 5 years.

A study of rail corrosion due to micro organisms has been awarded by railway to Centre for Electro Chemical Research Institute (CECRI)/Karaikudi. After getting the detailed report from CECRI/Karaikudi, further course of action will be decided.

(d) A total of 7295 bio-toilets have been installed in 2774 coaches till December' 2013 which are running in various mail/passenger trains on IR.

(e) Yes, Madam. While it would be IR's endeavour to install environment friendly toilets/ bio-toilets in all its passenger coaches (new as well as existing) at the earliest, the time frame for their full scale deployment cannot be forecast with reasonable accuracy as it will

depend upon the changes/modifications necessitated from time to time based on the feedback on its performance, outcome of the fitment trials, exigency of their usage pattern and other service conditions. However, it is planned to induct all new coaches fitted only with environment friendly toilets/bio-toilets from 2016-17 onwards and cover the entire fleet of passenger coaches by 2021-22 provided that there is no technical or operational setback.