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Parliamentary Consultative Committee on Railways Meets

Railways to Ensure High Quality Catering Service to Passengers : Dinesh Trivedi

The Minister of Railways, Shri Dinesh Trivedi said that Indian Railways has taken several measures to implement its new Catering Policy 2010 which aims at providing hygienically prepared, tasteful and wholesome food at reasonable prices to the passengers. He said that as a result of the new policy and its vigorous implementation by the Railways, complaints arising out of catering have come down by 49.9 per cent during October 2010 to September 2011 as compared to the corresponding period of last year. The Railway Minister assured that many more reforms, technical and institutional have been initiated which will fructify in the days to come. He informed that mega base kitchens initially at New Delhi, Mumbai, Secunderabad, Chennai and Howrah are proposed to be set up under the new policy.

The Railway Minister, Shri Dinesh Trivedi was speaking at the Consultative Committee meeting of Members of Parliament for Ministry of Railways here today i.e. 21st November, 2011. The agenda for the meeting was "Catering Services on Indian Railways". The Ministers of State for Railways, Shri K. H. Muniyappa and Shri Bharatsinh Solanki were especially present at the meeting. Chairman, Railway Board, Shri Vinay Mittal, other Members of the Board and senior officials of Ministry of Railways were among those who attended the meeting.

Referring to the complaints regarding non-availability of Janta Meals, the Railway Minister, Shri Trivedi informed that good quality regional culinary specialties at affordable prices, called "Jan Ahaar" have been introduced all over the country and till date, 51 Jan Ahaar outlets have been commissioned, providing quality food items at reasonable price and the menu has been diversified further in order to cater to regional and diverse taste of our countrymen like South & Eastern part of the country.

Emphasizing on the Railways concern about poor vendors and licensees, Shri Trivedi said that with the new policy their problems have been addressed as the license fee payable by the small vendors plying stalls, trolleys and khomchas has been rationalized in a fair, just and equitable manner. Also to check monopolistic tendencies in catering contracts, a ceiling limit on contracts has been imposed, the Minister added.

Pointing out to the Railways' commitment towards the welfare of various disadvantaged sections, Shri Trivedi said that in the new Catering Policy, 25 per cent reservations have been provided at A-1, A, B & C category of stations while 49.5 per cent in D, E & F category of stations. The above reservations have been provided to different categories such as SC, ST, OBC, Minorities, BPL, Freedom Fighters/women including war widows and widows of railway employees, persons who have been dislocated due to their land having been taken over by the railways for its own use and physically challenged persons.

Several MPs participating in the meeting drew attention about scope to further improve catering services on Indian Railways. Some of them suggested to provide pantry cars in more long distance trains. The Members also suggested for suitable measures to rehabilitate displaced vendors. They also raised various pending Railway issues pertaining to their respective constituencies which included new lines, new trains, extension of routes, increase in frequency of trains, ROBs, new halts, etc.

AKS/LK/TR