

# **The Times of India**

## **Large-scale vacancies in ECoR's rail safety department**

BHUBANESWAR: Derailment of the Hirakhand Express at Kunderu station on the Andhra Pradesh-Odisha border also brought to the fore large-scale vacancies in the position of safety staff in the East Coast Railways.

Nearly 50 % posts of guards, who are in charge of running trains, and 20% posts of gangmen, who take care of track maintenance are lying vacant in ECoR, sources said.

In the station master category of the total sanctioned strength of 1620, as many as 333 posts are vacant. Of the total 3,000 guard posts, 1,450 are lying vacant and out of total sanctioned post of 11,176 gang men 2,284 are lying vacant. Of the 443 sanctioned posts for junior engineers on track maintenance 419 are on the roll. Similarly nearly 1,262 locomotive pilot posts are vacant in the ECoR, official sources said.

Official sources said, "There was some restriction on the recruitment process in different categories of safety officer for the last few years. The restrictions have been lifted in 2015. Most of the safety staffs are overburdened.

The ECoR, however, has not got a very bad record in terms of train accidents or derailments except some incidents at unmanned level crossings.

As many as 15 people were killed and around 50 injured due to derailment of Coromandel Express in June 2009 and one person died and 22 others injured after Bhubaneswar-Bhadrak passenger train collided with a goods train near Baranga station in September 2016.

"Vacancies in safety categories are being reviewed from time to time by senior officers and necessary steps for recruitment is under process for several vacant posts, while many recruited staff are undertaking training and will join work soon," said chief public relations officer of ECoR, J P Mishra.