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News in numbers: Indian Railways is short of 2.17 lakh employees

The shortage in the number of frontline employees working in the “safety category” of the Indian Railways. These include patrolmen, trackmen, technicians, pointmen and station masters.

This personnel shortage could be a factor for rail accidents, with the most recent being the derailment of a train in Uttar Pradesh that left 146 dead and 200 injured. Between 2009-10 and 2013-14, 803 rail accidents (nearly half of them due to derailments) killed 620 people and injured 1,855. Such vacancies are likely to put pressure on existing employees, leading to over-work and increasing their chances of making mistakes.

The Indian Railways has a shortage of 2.17 lakh employees overall, of which 56% work falls in the safety category.