

The New Indian Express

Railway may shorten recruitment process from two years to six months

The nearly two-year-long recruitment process for railway jobs may soon be over in just six months, if things go according to plan. Hit by severe staff crunch, Railways is mulling shortening the process by introducing online tests among other steps.

In a meeting of general managers with Railway Board Chairman Ashwani Lohani soon after the derailment of the Vasco-Da-Gama-Patna Express on November 24, the zonal heads raised the issue of filling up of vacant posts in the railways, according to the minutes of the meeting available with PTI.

“The process of recruitment takes too long, taking almost two years since submission of application. Many candidates get alternative jobs, leading to the poor materialisation of indents (vacancy notice). With online tests etc the process should be speeded up,” general manager of Northeast Frontier Railway Chahatey Ram suggested in the meeting in the presence of 17 GMs.

In response, Lohani said that the Railway Recruitment Board (RRB) should review the process “with a target to complete it within six months”. The board has instructed its departments to submit their proposals on the issue by December 20. As of December 2016, Railways has a staff strength of more than 1.3 million, while it has 225,823 vacancies in Group ‘C’ and Group ‘D’ categories. According to data available with Railways, it has 122,911 vacancies in safety categories and a shortage of another 174,64 loco running staff. The vacancies range from profiles such as drivers, guards, gangmen and other technical staff.

Other general managers pointed out that zonal railways should be allowed to place vacancy notices directly to the RRB instead of going to the Railway Board, thereby reducing the time it takes to hire staff. Sources said that the board is considering the matter and is reviewing ways to “fast track” the process. The Railways has a staff strength of more than 1.3 million and its employees take care of the country’s 66,030 km of tracks, 10,773 locomotives, 63,046 coaches and 2.45 lakh wagons. The transport behemoth ferries over 20 million passengers daily.