

Business Standard

Railways on a hiring spree as over 225,000 posts remain vacant

At least 25,000 new employees are set to join the ranks of Indian Railways this financial year. This is at a time when the national transporter is staring at a shortage of over 225,000 employees.

“Nearly 25,000 new staff will be joining the Railways in 2017-18. Tests to recruit 18,252 posts, including assistant station master, inquiry-cum-reservation clerk, traffic and commercial apprentices, goods guards and junior accounts assistant have already been conducted. In addition to this, applications for another 7,000 assistant loco pilots will also be invited soon,” said an official source close to the development.

Soon after this, vacancies for another 13,000 will be open under various categories, including technical supervisors.

In 2016, the Railways grabbed headlines by conducting the world’s largest online examination in which 9.2 million job applications were received for 18,252 vacancies.

“More than 270,000 people out of this were called for written test early this year and we finally short-listed about 18,000 people. These applicants are set to join us in a few months time,” the official mentioned earlier added.

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.

JOB STATION

1.3 million

Staff strength
as of December
2016

225,823

vacancies in Group
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Group ‘D’ categories

122,911

vacancies in
safety categories
and shortage

17,464

vacancies in
loco running
staff

According to data available with Railways, it has 122,911 vacancies in safety categories and a shortage of another 174,64 loco running staff.

This comes at a time when an audit on gazette officers manpower conducted by Deloitte, submitted to Railways suggested that it is neither “under-staffed nor overstaffed” in the officer category. The executive officer strength of Railways is around 18,000. Deloitte was expected to formulate a manpower policy for the gazetted officers of Railways.

“Though people say we have vacancies of over 200,000, a large chunk of it is not needed to be filled up because of advancement of technologies and computerisations of safety mechanism. Filling up of vacancies is a continuous process through various modes of intake,” the official added.

Railways was planning the rationalisation of its manpower over the years and in a decade, it has recommended surrender of close to 140,000 posts, according to sources.

Railway officials say the bulk of the accidents that take place every year is at unmanned level crossings. Indian Railways currently has more than 6,000 unmanned railway crosses across the country now.

In the wake of recent accidents, critics were highlighting the staff strength also as a cause of concern for safety.

Indian Railways extends to more than 67,312-kilometre track, having about 12,600 trains carrying about 23 million passengers a day.