Safety concerns in Indian Railways

What is the issue?

\n\n

Derailment of the Kalinga Utkal Express in Khatauli in Uttar Pradesh demands a deeper analysis of the working of Indian Railways.

\n\n

What led to the incident?

\n\n

\n
- Preliminary probe suggests that the train derailed because it was allowed to run on a section of track that was undergoing repair and maintenance work.
\n
- Not blocking the traffic while the repairs were being conducted is said to be the main lapse.
\n
- The twin demands of punctuality and carrying out repair works on tracks has led to a compromise on the minimum safety standards.
\n
- The government has responded to the incident by sending some top officials on leave with immediate effect, and suspending some others.
\n

\n\n

Is the government's response appropriate?

\n\n

\n
- Indian Railways has had an undesirable safety record given the high incidence of derailments and resultant tragedies.
\n
- A Parliamentary Standing Committee report on railway safety noted that 75 to 85 % of all railway accidents happen because of derailment.
\n
- It's a known fact that there is an acute deficiency when it comes to maintenance and track renewal in Indian Railways.

\n
- The growth in the route kilometres in railways is disproportionate with the percentage rise in the traffic of passengers and freight over the railway network.
\n
- The government has only tried to find a quick fix solutions for the accidents by treating them as episodes of “sabotage” or isolated episodes of mistakes at the level of local officials.
\n
- However, the response requires attention to the larger question of systemic problems in railway services and associated safety requirements.
\n

\n\n

What lies before the government?

\n\n

\n
- Government should speed up the setting up of Rashtriya Rail Sanranksha Kosh announced in the Budget for 2017-18.
\n
- The fund, a recommendation of the Anil Kakodkar-led high-level safety review committee, is intended to improve safety preparedness and maintenance practices.
\n
- The railway ministry should move beyond announcing new trains and pay attention to systemic problems of maintenance, safety, sanitation and timeliness.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: Business Standard

\n\n

\n\n

\n\n

\n



SHANKAR
IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering