

cases for restoring the air services, particularly to Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the near future.

SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA :
Sir, the Hon. Member's suggestions and sentiments have been noted.

[Translation]

Conversion and Doubling of Metre Gauge Lines

*45. **SHRI RAJVEER SINGH :**
Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to convert the metre-gauge lines into broad-gauge ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) whether a decision has also been taken to double some metre-gauge lines ;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the expenditure involved therein ; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor and the alternative steps being taken to provide additional travel facilities to the passengers ?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN) : (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

STATEMENT

(a) Conversion of Metre Gauge Lines to Broad Gauge is taken up considering merits of each case. Such works are included in the budget after obtaining the approval of Planning Commission. The works are taken up after approval of the Budget by the Parliament.

(b) Details of Gauge Conversion works currently in progress are given below :—

Serial No.	Name of project	Km.
1	2	3
1	Phulera—Bikaner (Lalgarh) and Merta Road—Jodhpur	430
2	Bhildi—Samdari and parallel BG line from Samdari—Jodhpur	303
3	Chhapra—Arrah	171
4	Salempur—Barhajbazar	21
5	Samastipur—Darbhanga	37
6	Kashipur—Lalkua	60
7	Mysore—Bangalore	138
8	Manmad—Parbhani—Parlivaajnath	354
9	Parbhani—Purna & Mudkhed—Adilabad and parallel BG from Purna—Mudkhed	248
10	Sawaimadhopur—Jaipur & parallel BG line from Jaipur—Phulera	187
11	Bhildi—Viramgam New Line/Conversion	145
12	Nadiad—Kapadvanj	45

(c) Doubling of existing single line sections whether on Broad Gauge or Metre Gauge is taken up to improve the carrying capacity on saturated sections.

(d) Doubling of 31 km Metre Gauge line on Delhi-Rewari section is in progress. 21 km between Garhi

Harsaru and Pataudi Road has been completed and 10 km. between Pataudi Road and Khalilpur is yet to be opened. Cost of this work is anticipated to be Rs. 19.82 crores.

(e) Upgradation for line capacity augmentation by improving track, standard of signalling etc. is being

taken up wherever necessary to meet the requirements of traffic.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH : Mr Speaker, Sir, through you I would like to know from the Hon. Minister, the steps being taken for converting metre gauge lines into broad gauge lines. The hilly areas of Uttar Pradesh are connected with Agra-Kathgodam metre gauge line only. People coming from Bombay, Madras and other places to hilly areas have to change train at Agra and catch metre gauge trains for Kathgodam. But due to lack of facilities and absence of broad gauge line, very few people come by train to this area. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister, the time by which metre gauge line from Agra to Kathgodam will be converted into broad gauge line ?

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER : From general you are going to specific.

SHRI MALLIKARJUN : The question is in the general form. But however, what the Hon. Member wants that is not at the moment, before the Railways to consider.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think that the Ministers of the new Government do not come fully prepared in the House and try to evade replies by simply saying that information is being collected. They must collect all the information before coming to the House. They must also think that supplement arises—related to the main question will also be asked. The Hon. Minister has men-

tioned in the statement that Kashipur-Lalkua track will be doubled. I would like to ask him by when the doubling of 7 km. track between Kashipur and Lalkua is likely to be completed and opened to traffic ?

MR. SPEAKER : This question is not of general nature.

[*English*]

SHRI MALLIKARJUN : The distance from Kashipur to Lalkuan is 60 kms. and not 7 kms. At the moment, the work is in progress and depending upon the availability of funds, it will be completed.

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES : When will the Mysore-Bangalore metre gauge conversion be completed? I also want to know whether it is before the Government to convert Mangalore-Bangalore metre gauge line ?

SHRI MALLIKARJUN : As I have already said at the moment, Mysore-Bangalore conversion is under the consideration. (*Interruptions*).

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF) : The Bangalore-Mysore conversion is in progress and it is likely to be completed by December, 1992.

[*Translation*]

SHRI CHHEDI PASWAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you I would like to know, whether it is a fact that in 1984, the Government of Bihar sent a proposal for converting Paha-leja, Pipradih, Bhavnathpur metre gauge line into broad gauge line. In 1988 the Central Government accorded permission for conversion of

this line and had assured that it would be done without any further delay. But till now nothing has been done. So I want to know from the Hon. Minister the time by which the conversion work of Pahaleja, Pipradih, Bhavnathpur metre gauge line into broad gauge will be done ?

[*English*]

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF : As you know, the main question is in very clear general terms. I would like to answer this question in general terms but in a specific manner.

Unfortunately, the metre gauge system has not gained so much of importance as the broad gauge has. The reason being whether it is the public sector investment or private sector investment, they always look to the broad gauge system. The private sector or the public sector does not like to invest in the areas of metre gauge. That is one of the reasons why the metre gauge is neglected.

To convert the entire metre gauge into broad gauge requires thousands of crores of rupees which we cannot afford to. But I am very clear in my mind that as long as both systems have to exist, we cannot continue to ignore the metre gauge as that system also has to cater to the needs of the people in those regions where we have not been able to make the conversion. Therefore, I have already advised my Ministry to examine how we can upgrade the metre-gauge itself as long as we want to serve the people in those areas without making them to suffer. It should be made in such a way that it generates confidence in both the private and public sectors and they

would come forward to make such investment that the area can develop and produce returns.

[*Translation*]

SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, while giving reply to this question the Minister has repeatedly used two-three words. The Hon. Minister has stated that the work of converting metre gauge lines into broad gauge lines will be taken up on the basis of merits and demerits of each project with a view to improve productivity and efficiency. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister the criteria for merits and demerits of each project. The Indore-Khandwa metre gauge line is 100 years old. So under which category this line's conversion falls on the basis of the concept of merits of each case ?

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to tell the Hon. Member that Government is considering the proposal for conversion of all the metre gauge lines into broad gauge. We want to remove all the difficulties which are being faced by the people of backward areas and create such conditions which may be favourable for speedy development of those regions.

SHRI HARI KISHORE SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it has been stated in the reply to the part (b) of the question that the work of converting Samastipur—Darbhanga metre gauge line is in progress. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister the time by which the work is likely to be completed and whether there is any proposal to extend the conversion of

railway track beyond Darbhanga upto Narkatiyaganj .. (*Interruptions*) ..

MR. SPEAKER : Please ask a specific question.

SHRI HARI KISHORE SINGH : My question is quite specific .. (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER : It is an expected question. If the Minister has information, I have no objection.

SHRI MALLIKARJUN : Samastipur-Darbhanga conversion has been included but because of paucity of funds, the progress is very very slow.

SHRI HARI KISHORE SINGH : Why? You make funds available. Is it because of the change of Government or what?

[*Translation*]

SHRI CHANDRA JEET YADAV : Mr. Speaker, Sir, because the Hon. Minister is replying to the specific question .. (*Interruptions*), he has rightly stated that because of the metre gauge lines in the backward areas the industrialists hesitate to set up new industries there. You are well aware that the Eastern region of Uttar Pradesh is the most backward area of the country. The Shahganj—Maunathbhanjan is a metre gauge line and the previous Government announced that it would soon be converted into broad gauge line. I and Shri Kalp Nath Rai, both of us hail from the eastern region viz. Azamgarh and Maunathbhanjan districts. The question is not of development of just these two districts, but of the whole eastern region of U.P.

Will the Hon. Minister sympathetically consider the request for providing the funds for conversion of Shahganj—Maunathbhanjan metre gauge line into broad gauge line?

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would also like to make it clear that though the Government favours conversion of the lines mentioned by Shri Chandra Jeet Yadav and others but I cannot promise the time by which we will be able to do it because, until the economic condition of our country improves, we cannot start new projects. We have to mobilise our resources and streamline the economic condition of our country .. (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : Would you invite foreign investment for conversion? .. (*Interruptions*) ..

MR. SPEAKER : You cannot do like this ..

(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI YELLAIAH NANDI : Just now, the Hon. Minister has stated that the backward areas of the country should not remain devoid of the rail transport facility for long. I would like to tell the Hon. Minister that in Medak district of Andhra Pradesh, the work for constructing 8 km. of rail track had been going on for the last 15 years. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister the time likely to be taken for transforming the backward area into the area of affluence.