

[English]

### **Doubling of Railway Line**

1019. SHRI M. RAMANNA RAI:  
SHRI K. MURALEE DHARAN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the Government are aware of an offer made for taking up the work of doubling the Shoranur-Mangalore railway line by the Konkan Railway authorities; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) No such offer has been received.

(b) Does not arise.

(Translation)

### **Reservation Quota for VIPs**

1020. SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV:  
SHRI LALL BABU RAI:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of emergency reservation quota for Very Important Persons in various mail and express trains in each class;

(b) how many hours before the departure of the trains the unutilised quota is released for general public; and

(c) the measures adopted by the Railways to ensure proper utilisation of the unutilized quota meant for VIPs?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) A limited number of berths/seats have been earmarked as Emergency Quota which differ from train to train and station to station depending on requirements. It generally ranges from 2 to 45 berths/seats.

(b) and (c) The Emergency Quota is released by the nominated officers as per the prescribed instructions and the utilised portion of the Emergency Quota is allotted to the RAC and waitlisted passengers at the time of preparation of charts. In the computerised reservation system, the computer automatically releases the unutilised quota to RAC/waitlisted passengers before the printing of the charts. Surprise and periodic checks are conducted from-time to time to ensure that the emergency quota is properly used and unutilised quota released to the RAC/Waitlisted passengers in order of their priority.

### **Gauge Conversion between Agra and Bandikui**

1021. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to refer to the reply given to unstarred Question No. 1442 on August 2, 1994 and state:

(a) whether the Planning Commission has given approval for gauge conversion between Agra and Bandikui; and

(b) if so, the time by which this work is likely to be completed and become operational?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Work will be taken up after Planning Commission's approval is received. Target date can be fixed only after the work is approved.

[English]

### **Passengers Facilities**

1022. SHRI CHITTA BASU:  
SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether facilities for passengers on Sealdah station in Calcutta are inadequate; and

(b) if so, steps proposed to be taken to improve the facilities there?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) and (b) Sealdah station is already provided with passenger amenities commensurate with the level of traffic handled at the station and based on the norms adopted for the purpose. However, augmentation of facilities is a continuous process and this shall be done when so warranted by a growth in traffic.

### **Degraded Forest Land**

1023. SHRI PRAKASH V. PATIL:  
SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE:  
SHRI DHARMANNA MONDAYA SADUL:  
SHRI GOVINDRAO NIKAM:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have considered to allot waste and degraded forest land to private parties for development;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the general policy and criteria adopted therefor; and

(c) if not, the time by which the decision is likely to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (c) In view of the increasing threat of encroachment upon the large quantum of degraded forest land in the country and the need to afford it urgently so as to expand green cover, inhibit encroachment and halt soil denudation and also to meet fuel and fodder needs and thereby to reduce pressure on existing natural forests and protected areas, the Government is considering to involve industry in afforestation of severely degraded areas in partnership with State Forest Development Corporations so as to augment the efforts and the financial resources available for afforestation schemes of the Central and State

Government, NGOs and People's Cooperatives.

As envisioned, the scheme is intended to benefit rural and tribal communities by increasing the availability of biomass, fuelwood, and fodder, and also opening up avenues for rural employment generation. The Scheme under consideration will be finalised only after careful assessment of various issues involved and ensuring protection of traditional rights and concessions being enjoyed by the rural and tribal communities.

#### Deforestation in Orissa

1024. SHRI K. PRADHANI:  
DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the massive deforestation in Orissa particularly in Bhitarkanika area which has adverse impact on the eco-system of the State;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to rejuvenate the eco-system of the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH):

(a) to (c) The information is being collected from the State Government of Orissa and will be laid on the Table of the House.

#### Acquisition of Land

1025. SHRI KASHIRAM RANA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railway administration has sent a proposal to the Surat Municipality for acquisition of land so as to provide better railway amenities to people residing along Varachha road in Surat city;

(b) if so, whether the State Government has issued any notification for handing over the land to the railway administration; and

(c) the amenities likely to be provided on the land proposed to be acquired and the estimated cost likely to be incurred thereon?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Surat Municipal Corporation is to develop circulating area and parking facilities on this land. State Government have issued notification for the acquisition of land. As the circulating area and the parking place are to be developed by the Surat Municipal Corporation, themselves, the land is not to be taken over by the railways and the cost of land and the facilities thereon will be borne by the State Government.

[Translation]

#### Allotment of Surplus Railway Land

1026. SHRI SUKHDEO PASWAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to set up an all-Party Committee for finding a solution of serious problems like long waiting for reservations, expansion of railway tracks for traffic, allotment of surplus railway land to the educated unemployed, providing better amenities to passengers etc. in Railways;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Railways are already having the system of periodical meetings of general Managers and Divisional Railway Managers with MPs of the area. Recommendations about the improvement in passenger amenities and other problems faced by the users are received from them. A Passenger Amenities Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri R. S. Panj hazari, Ex-MP, to oversee various passenger amenities on Railways is also functioning. Besides, there are various statutory Parliamentary Committees to look into and make recommendations about railway working. Specific Parliamentary Committees and Groups are also constituted from time to time to study different aspects of the railway working as considered necessary.

[English]

#### Foodgrains Under PDS

1027. SHRI RAM PRASAD SINGH:  
SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY:

Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of rise in the prices of foodgrains sold through the Public Distribution System during 1992, 1993 and 1994; and

(b) the extent to which the sale of foodgrains through Public Distribution System Came down in 1994 due to the rise in prices of essential commodities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI KALP NATH RAI): (a) A statement is attached.

(b) The offtake of foodgrains from Central Pool during the period from January to October, 1994 has been less by 6.77% compared to the corresponding period of last year. The lower offtake of foodgrains (wheat & rice) in Public Distribution System is mainly due to better local availability of coarse grain, rice and wheat, on account of two consecutive years of food production (1992-93 and 1993-94, July-June).