

(c) the employment opportunities likely to be created in the mineral sector by the year 2000, particularly in Rajasthan;

(d) whether any time limit has been prescribed in Rajasthan for the sanctioning, renewal and transfer of the mining lease; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAVA) : (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

Separate Berth in VSP

80. PROF. UMMAREDDY VENKATESWARLU : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received any proposal from the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP) for setting up of a separate berth in the Vizag Port;

(b) if so, the capital outlay involved and other details thereof; and

(c) the reasons for seeking such a large financial outlay by the VSP?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV) : (a) to (c) Visakhapatnam Steel Plant has not given any proposal for setting up of a separate Berth in the Visakhapatnam Port. However, VSP is proposing to set up Jetty facility at Gangavaram for exclusive use of VSP for handling of about 5 million tonnes of cargo per annum. VSP is working out modalities for construction and operation of Jetty facility in consultation with Visakhapatnam Port Trust and other agencies concerned.

[Translation]

Toll tax in States

81. SHRI DATTA MEGHE :
SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA :

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the National Highways Act was amended in 1992 to collect toll-tax from the road users and others;

(b) the names of the States wherefrom toll-tax has been withdrawn and the names of States where it is still being charged;

(c) whether Government have been charging the tax in the form of other taxes by floating private contracts in those States wherefrom this tax has been withdrawn;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the criteria laid down for awarding such contracts; and

(f) the annual income being earned by the Government of this account?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER) : (a) and (b). The National Highways Act, 1956 was amended with effect from 1.1.93 enabling the Government to levy fee on users for use of sections of National Highways. Even-though fee is being levied on Bridges, no such fee has been levied on the sections of the National Highways so far.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) to (f). Do not arise.

Tram service between Delhi and Ghaziabad

82. SHRI AMAR PAL SINGH :
SHRI BRIJBHUSHAN SHARAN SINGH :
SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY :
SHRI RAMPAL SINGH :

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a proposal under consideration of the Government to introduce tram service between Delhi and Ghaziabad;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the time by which the above service is likely to be started; and

(c) the cost likely to be incurred on the above service?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) A survey is being undertaken in order to assess the feasibility of the proposal. Since the proposal is

in initial stages of examination, it is too early to indicate the cost and the time schedule for the start of the service.

**Development and Maintenance of
National Highways in U.P.**

83. DR. P.R. GANGWAR : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) the total funds allocated by the Union Government to the State Government of Uttar Pradesh for the development and maintenance of National Highways in the State for the current year; and

(b) the expenditure likely to be incurred on the National Highways out of the funds allocated indicating the details of National Highways on which it would be spent.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER) : (a) and (b). Rs. 7950.00 lakhs has been allocated for development and maintenance of National Highways in Uttar Pradesh during the current financial year. Details of National Highways on which expenditure is to be incurred during the current year is as follows :

N.Hs : 2, 3, 7, 11, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 56.

Hike in Price of Soft Drinks

84. SHRI BRIJBHUSHAN SHARAN SINGH :
SHRIMATI BHAVNA CHIKHLIA :
SHRI RAMPAL SINGH :
SHRI RABI RAY :
SHRI MOHAN RAWALE :
SHRI R. SURENDER REDDY :

Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the multinational companies have increased the prices of soft drinks recently;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the percentage of rise in the prices;

(c) whether the Union Government had reduced the excise duty on soft drinks in the budget so that the consumers could get the benefit of it;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government against the multinational companies responsible for price hike?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI TARUN GOGOI) : (a) Prices of various soft drinks manufactured by Franchises/bottlers of M/s. Pepsi Foods Ltd. and M/s. Coca Cola are reported to have increased. However, there has been no price increase for the products of M/s. Cadbury Schwepps.

(b) The industry has cited the reasons for increase in prices of the soft drinks are due to the inflation and consequent rise in prices of raw-materials, reduction of available depreciation benefits on bottles, etc.

(c) and (d). Excise duty on aerated water has been reduced from 50% ad valorem to 40% ad valorem in the current year's budget.

(e) Price of soft drinks is not controlled by the Ministry. However, the industry has been advised to ensure the passing of excise duty concessions to the consumers.

Construction of bridge in Maharashtra

85. SHRI VILASRAO NAGNATHRAO GUNDEWAR : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether sanction has been accorded for the construction of any bridge under Central Road Fund in Maharashtra;

(b) if so, the name-wise and location-wise details thereof; and

(c) the progress made regarding the construction of these bridges?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. A list of 24 bridges approved under Central Road Fund for Government of Maharashtra during 8th Five Year Plan is given in the *Statement-I* attached.

(c) The above bridges are at various stages of construction. In addition, there are two 7th Plan works in progress as mentioned in the *Statement-II* attached.