

Airlines. Shortage of smaller capacity aircraft and the related operating crew do not permit Indian Airlines to consider operations on this route. Private Operators are, however, being encouraged to include new stations such as Aurangabad, Khajuraho etc. In their network, subject to viability.

[English]

Requirement and supply of wagons

334. SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the number of wagons in 1990-91 was more than that of 1996-97;

(b) If not, the facts in this regard;

(c) the reasons for which the deficiency of wagons was not met by the Railways; and

(d) the status of the requirement supply of railway during 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98 ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The number of wagons alone is not the deciding factor for carrying projected freight traffic. It depends on the type of stock also. Indian Railways have now been inducting higher capacity, roller-bearing, air brake stock and phasing out inefficient, plain bearing, four wheeler vacuum brake stock. As a result the wagon utilisation has increased appreciably from 1407/NTKm/Wagon/Day on line in 1990-91 to 1840 NTKm/Wagon/Day on line in 1996-97. Also, the wagon ineffective percentage (for BG stock) has come down from 4.07% in 1990-91 to 3.88% in 1996-97. This has enabled Indian Railways to carry higher traffic despite marginal reduction in wagon holding.

Moreover, in the first three years of VIII Plan i.e. 1992-93 to 1994-95, the freight traffic carried by the Railways did not increase as planned and therefore the wagon acquisition was curtailed from 1,20,000 in VIII Plan (1992-93 to 1996-97) to 81,000 only. Later due to sudden increase in traffic from December 1994 onwards, it was again revised upwards to nearly 1,00,000 in July 1995.

(d) The position of target of procurement and supply of Railway wagons in four wheeler units from 1995-96 to 1997-98 is as under :-

Year	Target Procurement	Actual supply
1995-96	19000	17950
1996-97	30000*	22185
1997-98	26000*	27865

*Incl. 5000 wagons (FWUs) under Own your Wagon Scheme & BOLT (for each year)

Bilateral Military Technical Cooperation with Russia

335. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SHINDE : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether during the recent Indo-Russian Defence officials' talk in New Delhi, an arrangement for bilateral military-technical cooperation was worked out;

(b) If so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken and being taken in pursuance thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) to (c) The fourth session of the Indo-Russian Group on Military-Technical Co-operation was held in New Delhi on December 19-21, 1997. Meeting of this Group are held at regular intervals in India and Russia to review the progress of defence co-operation between the two countries and to address any outstanding issues. These meetings also provide an opportunity for the two sides to discuss regional and international issues of mutual interest.

[Translation]

Financial Assistance for Basic Amenities

336. SHRI SURESH CHANDEL : Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi has sought financial assistance for providing basic amenities to the recently regularised colonies;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the amount provided/proposed to be provided in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BANDARU DATTATREYA) : (a) No such proposal has been received from the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of reply to part (a) above.

[English]

Airstrips in Maharashtra

337. SHRI RAMKRISHNA BABA PATIL : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to construct a number of airstrips in Maharashtra;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of airstrips and the places where these are to be constructed;

(d) whether the Government have provided financial assistance to the State Government in this regard;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) The Central Government has no such plans. With regard to the question of setting up a second airport at Mumbai, Government is awaiting the report of the committee set up under the chairmanship of the Chairman, Airports Authority of India.

(b) to (f) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Survey for Hazipur-Lalganj-Vaishali-Saraiya-Devriya-Sahabganj-Areraj-Sugouli Rail Line

338. SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the survey work of Hazipur-Lalganj-Vaishali-Saraiya-Devriya-Sahabganj-Areraj-Sugouli rail line was inaugurated by the then Railway Minister on December 17, 1997; and

(b) if so, the present status of the survey of above rail line ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The field work for the survey has been taken up.

Grant by WLDB for Plantation

339. SHRI JAGDAMBI PRASAD YADAV : Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the grant released by the Wastelands Development Board to the institutions and persons, separately for plantation during the last three years;

(b) whether most of these institutions and persons did not submit the necessary documents required for the next instalment and if submitted they were found fake on verification; and

(c) if so, the details of these institutions and persons and the action taken so far to recover the amount of grant from them ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BABAGOUDA PATIL) : (a) The Department of Wastelands Development is implementing the Grant-in-Aid scheme in which financial

assistance to develop non-forest wastelands is given to Voluntary Agencies/Non-Governmental Organisations. The number of Voluntary Agencies/Non-Governmental Organisations received grant under the scheme during the last three years is as under :

Year	No. of VAs/NGOs	Amount Released (Rs. in Crores)
1995-96	70	3.40
1996-97	65	3.50
1997-98	30	2.60

(b) and (c) No, Sir. However, in some cases Voluntary Agencies/Non-Governmental Organisations could not submit the necessary documents required for the next instalment. Action for recovery of the grant released in seven cases have been initiated.

Gauge Conversion

340. SHRI JAYSINHJI CHAUHAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received some representations from the Members of Parliament regarding gauge conversion of Gorakhpur-Raxol via Darbhanga from narrow gauge line into broad gauge line ;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the above conversion work is likely to be started ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Requests have been received from Members of Parliament for conversion of these lines to broad gauge.

(c) Conversion of Gorakhpur-Narkatiaganj is in progress and will be completed in 1998-99. Narkatiaganj-Raxaul-Darbhanga work is included in budget, to be taken up after obtaining the requisite clearances for which action has been initiated.

[English]

Backlog of SCs/STs Posts

341. DR JAYANTA RONGPI :

SHRI PUNNU LAL MOHALE :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of backlog vacancies in different categories reserved for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and OBCs during the last three years in Railways, zone-wise;