

(b) if so, the total amount payable by the DOT to the Hindustan Cable Ltd. (HCL) as on 30.6.1997 and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether HCL is starved of orders from DOT; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and the nature and extent of the held up orders ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Barring orders placed in the current years there is no admissible claim pending.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Introduction of Passenger Trains

352. SHRI BADAL CHOUDHURY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are considering to fulfil the demand of the people of North-Eastern States by introducing the passenger trains from different parts of North-Eastern States to Calcutta;

(b) if so, whether the Government propose to run Saraighat Express daily as a first step; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) to (c) Provision of additional services is a continuous process on Indian Railways subject to the availability of resources, operational feasibility and traffic justification. During 1997-98 extension of 5659/5660 Kamrup Express to Dibrugarh and extension of 6511/6512 Bangalore-Howrah weekly Express to Guwahati will provide additional services from the North-Eastern States to Calcutta. There is, however, no proposal to run Saraighat Express as a daily train.

Construction of Fly Overs

353. SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have since taken any steps to increase the speed of the trains between Howrah and Bandel and between Howrah and Kharagpur by constructing few fly-overs and removing the rail gates;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the progress, made in this regard, so far ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) and (b) Three busy level crossings are sanctioned for replacement with Road Over Bridges/Road Under Bridges. In addition the State Government has been asked to sponsor proposals on two busy level crossings i.e. Bagnan and Ramrajatala.

(c)(i) Road Under Bridge at Konnagar sanctioned in 1995-96 has progressed upto 50%.

(ii) Road Over Bridge at Liluah sanctioned in 1988-89 but the State Govt. has not fulfilled the conditions to take up the work.

(iii) Road Over Bridge at Maurigram sanctioned during 1997-98. The State Govt. is yet to confirm site to enable Railway to start the work.

Wages to E.D. Employees

354. SHRI A. SAMPATH : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Department of Posts had issued orders on November 27, 1996 condoning the period of absence from October 23, 1996 to October 29, 1996 of Postal Employees including the Extra-Departmental Employees;

(b) whether the Departmental Employees were paid the wages after treating the period of absence as on leave;

(c) whether in spite of the period of absence having been condoned, the extra-departmental employees have been denied wages for the period of absence;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether representations have been received for payment of wages for the period of absence to the extra-departmental employees; and

(f) if so, whether the Government are favourably considering the request for payment of wages for the period of absence to the extra-departmental employees ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The Extra-Departmental Agents are not entitled to wages for the period of absence from duty, on leave or otherwise, under the existing EDA (Conduct & Service) Rules, 1964. Therefore, no payment of wages was made to Extra Departmental Agents for their period of absence as this would tantamount to giving duty pay.

(e) and (f) A few representations have been received in the matter. Some officials have also to Court, and the matter is currently subjudice.

Doubling of Rail Line between Seoraphull and Tarakeswar

355. SHRI ANIL BASU : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that line utilisation capacity of Seoraphuli and Tarakeswar Section have reached on saturated point;

(b) if so, whether Government have since considered for construction of double line between this section;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) A techno-economic survey was conducted for augmentation of line capacity of Seoraphuli-Tarakeswar section and this section was not recommended for doubling. However, some EMU trains are being augmented from 9 to 10 coaches and there is likelihood of increasing EMU train formation further by 2 coaches, thereby bringing about a significant increase in passenger carrying capacity of trains. There is hardly any goods traffic on this section.

Telephone Connections in Barddhaman

356. SHRI BALAI CHANDRA RAY : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether several persons have got their names registered for telephone connections at Rasulpur under Barddhaman Telephone Exchange but they are not getting connection for a long time;

(b) if so, whether any steps have been taken to

provide telephone connections to all waiting list persons of Rasulpur; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir. The number of prospective Registered subscribers in the Waiting List of Rasulpur Telephone Exchange is 83 only as on 30.6.97

(b) Yes Sir.

(c) The present Telephone Exchange at Rasulpur with a capacity of 368 lines is having 319 working connections, and the same is planned to be replaced by 1000 C-DOT to cater the existing waiting list and the future demands of telephone connection during the current financial year.

Telecommunication services in Tripura and West Bengal

357. SHRI BAJU BAN RIYAN :
DR. RAM CHANDRA DOME :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have taken any steps to improve the functioning of Telecommunication services in Tripura and in the District of Birbhum, West Bengal; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The following steps have been taken to improve the services :-

(A) TRIPURA :

(i) There are 47 electronic exchanges, 44 exchanges are having STD facility. The remaining three exchanges viz. Hmanpui, Kanchanpur and Manubazar will be provided STD facility during 97-98.

(ii) The capacity of existing telephone exchange at Agartala is being further augmented by additional 4000 lines.

(iii) 55% villages are provided with public telephones. The remaining villages will be provided with telephone facility during the 9th Five Year Plan.