

[English]

Importance of TV Programmes

232. SHRI VIJAY GOEL : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the government have conducted and study/survey regarding the progress made on the T.V. programmes after the introduction of foreign TV channels for Indian viewers :

(b) if so, the outcome thereof;

(c) whether the Government have received any feedback from the viewers who thought that the foreign channels excel in improving advertising programmes for consumer goods, their introduction has done little to improve the quality of the entertainment programmes which are mostly the re-run of the popular Doordarshan serials;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) if so, whether the Government are contemplating any change in its policy to permit only such foreign TV channels which promise to cater to Indian cultural values, education and tastes; and

(f) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY) : (a) No specific study has been conducted by Doordarshan.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) to (f) There are different perceptions about the programmes of the foreign channels. The Government has introduced the Broadcasting Bill, 1997 in the Parliament which inter alia provides for a regulatory authority for all the TV channels in the country. This bill is currently being examined by a Select Committee of the Parliament.

Portable Satellite Communication Service

233. SHRI K.P. NAIDU : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the salient features of Mini-M, the new portable satellite communication service;

(b) the call charges per minute;

(c) whether connections are given to all appli-

cants; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Sir, Inmarsat-phone Mini-M is the new global mobile phone service supporting voice telephones, fax and data services at 2.4 kbps. Inmarsat-phone Mini-M terminals are among the smallest and lightest (approximately 2.4 kg) satellite phones ever made.

The cost of the terminal is appx Rs. 2.75 lakhs, inclusive of all taxes and duties.

(b) The call charges per minutes is around Rs. 116/-

(c) Connections are given to applicants after the technical scrutiny of their applications in the Deptt. of Telecommunications are subsequent clearance of the case in Wireless Planning and Coordination Wing (WPC) of Ministry of Communications.

(d) In view of (c) above, the question does not arise.

Increase in Frequency of Howrah-Nagpur Azad Hind Express

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

(a) whether the Government propose to increase the frequency of Howrah-Nagpur Azad Hind Express;

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) There is no proposal at present to increase the frequency of 1029/1030 Howrah-Pune Azad Hind Express via Nagpur.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Operational and resource constraints.

Running of EMU Service between Kharagpur and Sealdah

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

(a) whether the Government have since taken any

steps to run EMU service between Kharagpur and Sealdah via C.C. Chord section;

(b) if not, the reasons for delay to start this service when all facilities are available;

(c) whether the Government are aware of the fact that if this service is being introduced, the pressure on Howrah railway station would be reduced considerably; and

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

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) to (d) Provision of a direct EMU service between Kharagpur and Sealdah could provide some relief to Howrah Railway Station. However introduction of direct passenger trains between Kharagpur and Sealdah via Andul-Calcutta Chord is presently not feasible due to operational and technical constraints. An Engineering-cum-traffic survey for Kharagpur-Dankuni-Sealdah sector has been taken up.

Shortage of Staff

236. SHRI MEHBOOB ZAHEDI :
SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether due to shortage of staff, posting of Train Superintendents have been delayed in selected trains;

(b) the initiative taken by the Government to fill up the vacant post;

(c) whether the Government are considering any proposal to promote junior Staff to Train Superintendent (TS) and create new posts;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the efforts which are underway to post Train Superintendents in the selected trains ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) to (e) The postings of Train Superintendents have been delayed in some trains due to non-availability of suitable willing staff. All out efforts are underway for posting Train Superintendents in the selected trains by deploying willing staff and creation of additional posts.

Introduction of Superfast Train between Howrah and Kanyakumari

237. SHRI A. SAMPATH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have since taken note of the demand of the people of Karala as well as Calcutta for a superfast train between Howrah and Kanyakumari;

(b) if so, whether the Government propose to introduce at least once a week such train between these two places;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons for forcing the people to avail break-journey to reach both the places ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) Yes, Sir. Some representations have been received in this regard.

(b) to (d) It has been decided to extend 6315/6316 Howrah-Cochin Express upto Trivendrum. Provision of a direct service between Howrah and Kanniya Kumari is presently not feasible due to operational and resource constraints.

Capacity of EMU Car Shed

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

(a) the details of homing capacity of EMU car-sheds under Howrah, Sealdah and Kharagpur divisions, car-shed wise;

(b) whether all the car-sheds are equipped to handle 12 coach EMU rakes;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor.

(d) whether there is any proposal to modernise these car-sheds and make them fit to handle 12 coach EMU rakes;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) The homing capacity of EMU car sheds under Howrah, Sealdah and Kharagpur Divisions are as under :-