

[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 aforest 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