

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) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Scientific Research Programme

4293. SHRI RAVI SITARAM NAIK : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have set up an Empowered Committee to approve Scientific Research Programmes; and

(b) if so, the details with objectives thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) An Empowered Committee has been set up under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Department of Steel with members from Department of Science & Technology, Planning Commission, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Main Producers of Steel, IIT Kharagpur, National Metallurgical Laboratory, Jamshedpur, Development Commissioner for Iron & Steel, and others with a view to providing overall direction to the total research effort on Iron & Steel in the country and approve specific research projects placed before it.

The Empowered Committee will *inter alia* examine all aspects of Science & Technology in the Iron & Steel sector; Co-ordinate and monitor the on-going research programmes in the iron & steel sector; review the progress of Science & Technology programmes of national importance in the Iron & Steel industry periodically and advise Ministry of Steel on policies and programmes in developing domestic capabilities for Research & Development in the Iron & Steel sector.

Flight for Delhi-Rajkot Sector

4294. SHRI GORDHANBHAI JAVIA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have any Plan to operate Indian Airlines flight between Delhi and Rajkot;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) to (c) No, Sir. The traffic potential on the sector Delhi-Rajkot is not adequate for operation of jet aircraft available in Indian Airlines/Alliance Air's fleet. Private

operators with suitable aircraft are being encouraged to add new stations including Rajkot in their network, subject to commercial viability.

Appointment of Chairman of AAI

4295. DR. Y.S. RAJA SEKARA REDDY : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Airports Authority of India is without a Chairman for the last two years;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps that are being taken by the Government in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) to (c) No, Sir. The post of Whole-time Chairman in the Airports Authority of India (AAI) became vacant on 14.10.1996 and the Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Civil Aviation had been holding additional charge of the post till the appointment of the new Chairman. On the basis of the recommendations of the Public Enterprises Selection Board and with the approval of the competent authority Shri D.V. Gupta has been appointed as Chairman, AAI with effect from 06.07.1998.

Merger of HSCL and VISL with SAIL

4296. DR. JAYANTA RONGPI :
SHRI MANJUNATH AYANUR :
SHRI SUNIL KHAN :

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to merge Hindustan Steelworks Construction Limited (HSCL) and Visvesvaraya Iron and Steel Limited (VISL) with Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL);

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether any Committee was formed by the Government in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the Committee has submitted its report; and

(f) if so, the reaction of the Government alongwith the action taken thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS) : (a) and (b) Government have decided to merge Visvesvaraya Iron & Steel Limited (VISL) with Steel Authority of India Limited

(SAIL) in public interest under the provision of Section 396 of the Companies Act, 1956. Its merger with SAIL would provide the right opportunity for technological upgradation and better resource management. The merger would also enable creation of a better market synergy and proper linkages to other Special Steel Plants of SAIL, etc.

At present, there is no proposal for merging Hindustan Steelworks Construction Limited (HSCL) with SAIL.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) to (f) Do not arise in view of (c) above.

Gauge Conversion

4297. SHRI NEPAL CHANDRA DAS : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the reasons for withdrawal of metre gauge railway line from Guwahati to Lumding which causes great inconvenience to the travelling public and traders of the barak Valley of Assam, Tripura, Mizoram and Manipur; and

(b) the steps being taken for smooth movement of goods and passengers trains till the gauge conversion is completed in the region ?

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) The metre gauge line between Guwahati and Lumding has been converted to Broad Gauge.

(b) Conversion of Lumding-Silchar line to Broad Gauge has been taken up. Till such time this work is completed, adequate transshipment facilities have been provided at Lumding.

Reservation Quota at Bhusawal Railway Station

4298. DR. ULHAS VASUDEO PATIL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the reservation quota at Bhusawal station, train-wise;

(b) whether the quota allotted to Bhusawal station fulfils the requirement of the passengers;

(c) if not, the measures taken/proposed to be taken to fulfil the requirement of the passengers;

(d) whether the Government propose to sanction VIP quota also from Bhusawal for Karnataka Express; and

(e) if so, the details thereof ?

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) A statement is attached.

(b) and (c) The reservation quotas available at Bhusawal are not being fully utilised in most of the trains and as such are considered adequate to meet the present level of traffic. However, from November, 1997 onwards an additional quota of 67 berths has been allotted at Bhusawal in various trains where the same was considered necessary.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) 2627/2628 Karnataka Express is a fully patronised train and it is not feasible to make any adjustment with a view to allot emergency quota at Bhusawal in this train.

Statement

The details of reservation quota available at Bhusawal are as under

Sl.No.	Train No.	Destination	Class	Quota
1	2	3	4	5
1.	2106 Vidarbha Express	Mumbai	AC 2 tier AC 3 tier Sleeper	8 6 25
2.	1015 Kushinagar Express	Gorakhpur	AC 2 tier Sleeper	2 24
3.	1016 Kushinagar Express	Mumbai	Sleeper	24