

The Countries from where steel is imported by India include Germany, Japan, France, Belgium, U.K. U.S.A. Iran, Korea, CIS countries etc.

(c) Sectors for which the imported steel is being used include cold Rolling Units, Auto/Cycle, Industry, Container Industry-Galvanising units, Engineering industry, Electrical industry, Re-rolling industry, Heavy industry etc.

(d) As per the existing policy, import of steel is freely allowed. It is neither cost effective nor economical for any country to produce all grades/specifications and qualities of steel specially where the quantities required are comparatively small. The producers of steel and constantly orienting their production to meet the market needs. Modernisation and expansion of steel plants of SAIL has been taken up towards this objective. Since 1991, Government has also adopted various policy measures to encourage creation of additional steel production capacities in the private sector. With the setting up of steel plants in the private sector, a major portion of the demand for steel which is presently imported is likely to be met by indigenous production.

#### **Vacant Posts in Armed Forces**

248. SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT 'BACHDA' : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of posts lying vacant in the various cadres of the defence services;

(b) whether any action plan has been chalked out in regard to filling up of these posts; and

(c) if so, the outline thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) to (c) The present vacancy position in respect of three services is given below :

	Officers	Personnel below Officers Rank (PBOR)
Army	13,324	38,000
Navy	1,060	3,498
Air Force	695	6,195

2. There is a deficiency of about 38,000 in the cadre of Personnel Below Officer Rank (PBOR) in the Army. However, approximately 71,000 recruits are currently under training, and hence this deficiency is national. Similarly in the case of Air Force, about 2,214 vacancies of airmen are planned to be filled up in the current financial year.

3. In the case of Army, where the magnitude of vacancy is large, the Government have launched an Image Projection Campaign during 1997-98 with the assistance of a professional advertising agency. In case of Navy and Air Force, the Government are making all out efforts to encour-

age induction of young people in Navy and Air Force by giving grater publicity in newspapers and media in order to get the best.

4. Various measures have been initiated to make up the shortage in the officer cadre in the Army, such as, University Entry Scheme, exemption from appearing in Combined Defence Service Examination for NCC 'C' certificate holders for induction as Short Service Commission Officer (SSCO), induction of women as officers, promotion of service JCOs/ORs into the newly created Special Commissioned Officer (SCO) cadre.

5. Implementation of the Fifth Pay Commission's recommendations in respect of defence services has resulted in improved pay scales, allowances and concessions to armed forces personnel. It is expected that the cumulative effect of all the measures will result in higher intake, making up vacancies to a considerable extent in the near future.

#### **Electrification of Barasat-Basirhat Section of Sealdah**

249. SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have taken any steps for electrification of Barasat-Basirhat section of Sealdah Division; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor ?

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) Barasat-Basirhat section is a part of Barasat-Hasnabad electrification project, for which a cost-cum-feasibility survey report has been prepared. Final decision to electrify this section will be taken on appraisal of the survey report.

#### **Expansion of NALCO**

250. SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have a proposal for the expansion of the Alumina Plant of the National Aluminium Company (NALCO) at Anugul in Orissa;

(b) if so, the details of the expansion posed;

(c) whether the smelter and captive power plants of the company are proposed to be expanded;

(d) if so, the fund earmarked therefor; and

(e) the steps taken in the expansion of the plant ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS) : (a) and (b) Government have approved expansion of the capacity of NALCO's bauxite mines from 2.4 million tonnes per year

MTPY) to 4.8 MTPY and that of their alumina refineries at Jaman-jodi in Orissa from 0.8 MTPY to 1.575 MTPY at a cost of Rs. 1665 crores (June, 1996 price level) in December, 1996. The project is to be implemented in 51 months time from the date of Govt. approval. Currently, the project is under implementation by NALCO and is progressing on schedule.

(c) to (e) Govt. have approved expansion of the capacity of NALCO's aluminium smelter at Angul, Orissa from 230000 TPY to 345000 TPY and that of the captive power plant from 720 MW to 840 MW at a cost of Rs. 2062 crores (June, 1997 price level) in February, 1998. The project is to be funded through internal resources, suppliers credit, external borrowings etc. The project is to be implemented in 51 months time from the date of Government approval. The company has appointed engineering consultants for expansion of the aluminium smelter and also for expansion of the captive power plant. Currently, the project is under implementation by NALCO and is progressing on schedule.

[Translation]

**Flights between Mumbai-Calcutta Via  
Ahmedabad, Indore and Bhopal**

251. SHRI ASHOK ARGAL : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether an Indian Airlines flight (No. I.C. 133) between Mumbai and Calcutta via Ahmedabad, Indore and Bhopal was in operation in 1992;

(b) if so, the reasons for its discontinuance; and

(c) by which date this flight is likely to be resumed ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) This flight was withdrawn due to shortage of operating crew in 1992.

(c) The traffic on these sectors is not adequate for operations with the existing Jet aircraft fleet of Indian Airlines. Shortage of smaller capacity aircraft and the related operating crew also do not permit operation of service on this route by Indian Airlines. Private operators are being encouraged to include new stations such as Ahmedabad, Indore and Bhopal in their network, subject to viability.

[English]

**Construction of Sitamarhi-Muzzaffarpur  
Railway Line**

252. SHRI SITA RAM YADAV : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the construction of railway line between Sitamarhi and Muzzaffarpur has been approved by the Government;

(b) whether any survey work has been executed on this line;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the time by which the construction work of the above line is proposed to be taken up and completed; and

(e) the amount earmarked for this project so far ?

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.

(c) The Survey has been completed which has revealed that the cost of this 63 kms. line will be Rs. 100 crs. with a negative rate of return.

(d) Land acquisition is in progress by State Government. Work will be taken up once land becomes available.

(e) The amount earmarked for the year 1997-98 was Rs. 0.01 cr. The outlay proposed for 1998-99 will become known when the budget is presented on 29.5.1998.

**Functioning of Computerised Booking  
Centres in Nagaland**

253. SHRI K.A. SANGTAM : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the fact that due to non-availability of direct Micro-wave link, the computerised booking centres in Nagaland remain in-operative for most of the times; and

(b) if so, the remedial steps being taken to make the system more effective ?

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) Passenger Reservation System at Nagaland (Kohima) has been functioning with an uptime of more than 90% in the last seven months excepting during November, 1997. Railways are maintaining constant touch with Department of Telecommunication (DOT) to sustain high degree of efficiency.

**Profit Earned by Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd.**

254. SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) the profit earned and losses suffered by the Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited, during each of the last two years;

(b) the reasons for the losses, if any; and