

(c) No Sir. Asbestos is included in the First Schedule of Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957 and prior approval of Central Government is required before the State Government can grant a prospecting licence or mining lease.

(d) As per information available with Indian Bureau of Mines, as on 25.11.98 a total of 110 mining leases have been granted for asbestos in the country.

(e) The total import of asbestos was 81,924 metric tonnes (MT) valued at Rs. 145 crore in 1995-96 and 77,498 metric tonnes (MT) valued at Rs. 146 crores in 1996-97.

(f) and (g) Production of asbestos during 1995-96 was 23,844 MT, during 1996-97 it was 27,180 MT and during 1997-98 the production was 23,021 MT. Hence it is evident that during 1997-98 production of asbestos has decreased.

Development of Housing Sector in Urban Areas

757. DR. ULHAS VASUDEO PATIL : Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received any memorandum from Punjab, Haryana and Delhi Chambers of Commerce and Industry for development of housing sector in urban areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BANDARU DATTATREYA) : (a) No such memorandum has been received recently;

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Supply of Wagons for Import of Sugar

758. SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details regarding the over all position of Railway wagons in terms of present and projected demand of various essential commodities and action plan to meet the same;

(b) whether the Government have received a proposal for supply of more wagons to facilitate import of sugar from Pakistan;

(c) if so, the details of the existing arrangement in this regard and additional wagons sought; and

(d) the details of action taken/proposed in the matter?

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) There is no shortage of Railway Wagons in relation to the present as well as projected demand of various essential commodities. The assessment of wagons is an ongoing process and is done after detailed discussion with all users/ministries. For the Ninth Plan, Indian Railway (IR) plans to procure 1,75,000 Four Wheeler Units (FWUs) to meet a projected demand of 525 MT at the end of the Ninth Plan. During 1997-98, the first year of the Ninth Plan, 27,865 wagons (FWUs) have already been procured for fresh acquisition/replacement of wagons. This includes wagons procured under Own Your Wagon Scheme (OYWS), and Build, Own, Lease, and Transfer (BOLT) schemes.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Wagons required to be loaded with sugar or any other commodity on Pakistan Railway (PR) are supplied by Pakistan Railway and normally these are PR wagons. After unloading in India, PR wagons are sent back either empty or loaded back to Pakistan. Similarly, for loading in our country, Indian Railways wagons are supplied and Pakistan Railway either returns them as empty or loaded with sugar or other commodities.

[Translation]

Cargo Services

759. SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA :
DR. ASHOK PATEL :
SHRI ANAND RATNA MAURYA :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to give licence to one other agency in the joint venture in addition to the Airports Authority of India to bring about competitiveness in the air cargo activities and for improvement in services at the airports;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the said agency is likely to be given licence?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) to (c) A decision has been taken 'in principle' to set up a joint venture cargo terminal at Indira Gandhi International Airport for handling and warehousing air cargo, which would be managed by the private joint venture partner. The modalities of private participation and the land/infrastructure to be offered for the purpose are currently being worked out by a designated Committee in the Airports Authority of India. The licencing process is likely to be completed by March, 1999.

[*English*]

Revival of Tata International Airport Project

760. SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that a team of Karnataka Government officials met the Tata Group Chairman Mr. Ratan Tata during the last week of September 1998 with a draft memorandum of understanding in connection with the revival of the Rs. 1500 crores airport project near Bangalore;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the result achieved therefrom?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. According to the information given by the Government of Karnataka, M/s Tata Industries and Government of Karnataka are presently reworking the viability of the project.

[*Translation*]

Leasing out of Railway Land

761. SHRI HARI KEWAL PRASAD : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the total land lying vacant alongwith rail lines in the country, zone-wise;

(b) whether the Government are contemplating to lease out the said land to landless people of the nearby villages for agricultural purpose;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the manner in which the land is likely to be utilised?

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) Zone-wise vacant railway land including along the railway lines is as under:

Railway	Vacant land (hectares)
Central	146
Eastern	2600
Northern	1828
North Eastern	4560
Northeast Frontier	2610
Southern	2040
South Central	8670
South Eastern	501
Western	1890
Total	24845