

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned 'Railways telecom recast' appearing in the "Economic Times" dated April 23, 1998;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government and facts of the matter reported therein;

(c) the present status of the proposal; and

(d) the details of the implications of the proposal and the time by which it is likely to be completed?

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) Yes, Sir.

(b) The news item is partially correct. No firm offer has yet been received for loan from financial institutions for modernisation of Railways telecom network. Railways have planned for laying of optic fibre cable (OFC) along the railway track on "Build Own Operate and Lease" (BOOL) basis through private sector participation. Under this scheme the contracted agency shall meet Railways, Telecom requirements and will be in a position to commercially exploit the surplus capacity in the OFC system.

(c) Indian Railways have been divided into 5-sectors for laying of OFC through private sector participation. Out of these, the work of laying OFC on Mumbai-Chennai section with spurs to Hyderabad and Bangalore has been offered to RITES and on New Delhi-Jaipur-Ajmer-Ahmedabad-Mumbai section IRCON. For the remaining sectors, it is proposed to invite global tenders.

(d) With this scheme it will be possible for the Railways to modernise their telecom network without making heavy investments. The scheme is likely to be implemented within 4 to 6 years from the date of award of contracts.

[Translation]

#### Linking of NOIDA with Rail Network

314. SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to link NOIDA with railway network; and

(b) if so, the steps taken so far or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard ?

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) A Survey has been taken up. Further consideration of the proposal will be possible once the report becomes available.

[English]

#### Report of Vatavaran

315. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the findings of a report of the non-governmental organisation VATAVARAN revealing that three of the busiest railway stations in the capital are slowly degenerating into breeding grounds for infectious diseases, as reported in 'Hindu' dated February 26, 1998; and

(b) if so, the gist of the findings of this survey report and action being taken by railways thereon ?

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) Yes, Sir.

(b) The survey report of Non-Government Organisation VATAVARAN mainly indicates the dumping of garbage and recycling of disposable items such as aluminium foils, plastic glasses and plastic spoons etc., causing unhygienic conditions and spread of infectious diseases. Several steps have been taken to minimise the use of disposable material and to curb the activities of rag pickers. All efforts are made to maintain the station premises clean. There is no report of out-break of any infectious disease, originating from the three major stations of Delhi.

#### Doubling of Patna-Gaya Rail Line

316. SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the doubling work on Patna-Gaya rail line has been started;

(b) if so, the time by which it is likely to be completed; and

(c) if not, the reasons 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) Yes, Sir. Work has been taken up in the first two phases from Patna to Parsabazar and Parsabazar to Punpun.

(b) The first phase from Patna to Parsabazar will be completed in this financial year while 2nd phase from Parsabazar to Punpun will take another 2-3 years.

(c) Does not arise.

#### Indian Airlines Flights on Gulf Routes

317. SHRI K.S. RAO : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :