

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MUKHTAR NAQVI): (a) There are 5505 registered daily newspapers published in different languages all over the country. The individual details of each of these papers are contained in a published document of the Registrar of Newspapers for India entitled "Press in India", which is updated annually. Each edition of the publication runs into hundred of pages and copies of the same are available in the Parliament House Library.

(b) and (c) There is no specific proposal at present.

Nuclear Command

2360. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SHINDE:
SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken to evolve and set up a strategic command and control system, after attaining nuclear weapon capability as a step towards creating a credible deterrent against weapons of mass destruction; and

(b) the precise nature and details of the command and control system?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) India's nuclear deterrent is predicated on the basic principle of strict political/civilian control. Such control would be exercised through appropriate scientific, technological and military management of the nuclear assets of the country to prevent unauthorised or accidental use.

Gauge Conversion

2361. COL. SONA RAM CHOUDHARY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether gauge conversion of Barmer-Luni-Munabao rail line sanctioned about two years ago but the funds allocated have been diverted;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the tenders for the gauge conversion of above line received and opened last year have been finalised; and

(d) 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) The work was sanctioned in 1997-98. Funds provided in 1998-99 had to be curtailed to some extent due to the cut in Plan size which became necessary owing to lesser availability of resources.

(c) and (d) The tenders for the ballast supply were opened in November 1997, for Civil works in December 1997 and for major bridges in April 1998. The tenders for the supply of ballast for one zone, all civil works and for major bridges have already been finalised.

AIR Station in Tuensang

2362. SHRI K.A. SANGTAM: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the AIR Stations in Tuensang, Mon have been completed more than a year ago but till date work are not being commissioned for want of staff; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MUKHTAR NAQVI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Concerted efforts are on to get the requisite staff sanctioned at the earliest.

[Translation]

Processing of Potatoes

2363. SHRI HARIKEWAL PRASAD:
SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR:
DR. BALRAM JAKHAR:

Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether any scheme for processing of potatoes in the Public Sector is under consideration of the Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;