

(e) Some of the steps taken to prevent accidents are as under :

- (i) The work of track circuiting has been accelerated on the trunk routes and other important main lines.
- (ii) Modification of the signalling circuitry is being carried out to minimise chances of human errors in causing accidents.
- (iii) There has been progressive increase in use of Tie Tamping and ballast cleaning machines for track maintenance.
- (iv) For monitoring track geometry and running characteristics of the track, sophisticated track recording cars, oscillograph cars and portable accelerometer are being progressively used.
- (v) Maintenance facilities for coaches and wagons have been modernised and upgraded at many depots.
- (vi) To prevent cases of cold breakage of axles, ROH Depots have been equipped with ultrasonic testing equipment for detection of flaws in the axles.
- (vii) Whistle boards/speed breakers and road signs have been provided at unmanned level crossings and visibility for drivers has been improved.
- (viii) Audio-visual publicity campaigns to educate road users on how to make a safe crossing are conducted.
- (ix) Steps have been taken to prevent inflammable and explosive materials from being carried in passenger trains.
- (x) Training facilities for drivers, guards and staff connected with train operation have been modernised including use of simulators for training of drivers.
- (xi) Refresher courses are regularly organised at specified intervals.
- (xii) Performance of the staff connected with train operations is being constantly monitored and those found deficient are sent for crash training.
- (xiii) Periodical safety drives are conducted to inculcate safety consciousness among the staff.

Delay in Running of Trains

2586. SHRI K.V. SURENDRA NATH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether complaints have been received from passengers as well as their association regarding delay in

running of trains and cancellation of services between Trivandrum and Kanyakumari section of the Trivandrum Railway Division;

(b) if so, any direction has been issued to ensure timely running of trains in this sector;

(c) whether the Government propose to take any action against those who are responsible for the late running of trains; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) Some complaints have been received from Passengers and Associations regarding delay in running of trains.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) Staff responsible for avoidable detentions have been taken up for action under Discipline and Appeal Rules.

Introduction of Direct Trains

2587. DR. ASIM BALA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that direct train services between Bandel and Kalyani/Ranaghat/Krishnanagar can easily be introduced by laying a kilometer of rail line by-passing Naihati;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether these services can be introduced by constructing a curve line from Garifa to Halisahar;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the earth-work of the said section still exist; and

(f) if so, the steps taken to fulfil the aspiration of a large section of people by constructing this curve line?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) to (f) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Full Time Programmes at West Bengal

2588. SHRI MEHBOOB ZAHEDI : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have since taken any decision to run TV Relay Centre at Kalna in the district of Bardhaman, West Bengal full time.

(b) whether the Government have sanctioned staff for operation and maintenance of the project so far;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the steps to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY) : (a) to (d) The Low Power TV transmitter (LPT) at Kalna is presently being run by a truncated staff sanctioned for this project and hence provides only limited hours of transmission. Full Time transmission from the LPT centre at Kalna would be started after sanction of full complement of staff for its operation and maintenance, the proposal for which is already under consideration.

Jalpaiguri-Siliguri Telephone Exchange

2589. PROF. JITENDRA NATH DAS :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are considering to bring Jalpaiguri-Siliguri area under one telephone exchange;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government in this regard; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Not applicable in view of (a).

(c) As per existing departmental norms Jalpaiguri-Siliguri areas do not fulfill the criteria for being served under one telephone exchange system.

As per National charging plan, Jalpaiguri & Siliguri are two separate LDCAs (Long Distance Charging Areas), which are further subdivided in six and three SDCAs (Short Distance Charging Areas) respectively. All the Telecom network is built on the LDCA and SDCA concept throughout the country.

Financial Assistance to Scientific Projects of Andhra Pradesh

2590. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Technology Development Board has cleared two projects for financial assistance to be set up in Andhra Pradesh; and

(b) if so, the details of the projects and the total assistance to be provided ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) Yes, Sir;

(b) the project details including the total assistance to be provided to the two projects are tabulated below :

S.No.	Name of the Project	Name of the concern seeking Assistance	Project Cost	Loan Amount sanctioned
1.	Production of Hepatitis - B Vaccine.	M/s. Shantha Biotechnics Pvt. Ltd., Hyderabad	Rs. 15 cr	Rs 3.0 cr
2.	Establishment of 10 Ton per hour Fresh Fruit Bunches Palm Oil Mill at Ashwaraopet (A.P.)	M/s. Andhra Pradesh Co-operative Oil Seeds Growers' Federation Ltd., Hyderabad	Rs. 11.6 cr	Rs. 3.4 cr

Construction of Over Bridge at Varkala

2591. SHRI. A. SAMPATH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the amount spent so far on the construction of railway over bridge at Varkala in Trivandrum district of Kerala;

(b) whether the construction work of overbridge is being delayed; and

(c) if so, the measures taken for the speedy completion of the bridge?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) to (c) There is no proposal for construction of Road Over Bridge at Varkala. However, a Road Under Bridge in lieu of level crossing No. 561 at Km. 179/13-14 on Quilon-Trivandrum section near Varkala was sanctioned during Works Programme of 1996-97. General Arrangement Drawing as well as location has been finalized and estimate sanctioned. Tenders are being called shortly.