

Bhunter Airport

308. SHRI SAT MAHAJAN : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Bhunter (Kullu) aerodrome in Himachal Pradesh is not fully capable to handle the vast tourist inflow to Kullu, Manali, Manikaran, Berskund and other important hilly stations in and around the valley;

(b) if so, whether any proposal for the expansion of this airport is under consideration of the Government ;

(c) the time by which the proposal is likely to be cleared and work of expansion of the airport started; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATRAJAN) : (a) Bhunter Airport belongs to Airports Authority of India (AAI) and the airport infrastructure is suitable for operation of 20 seater type of aircraft and is fit for fair-weather operations only due to hilly terrain.

(b) Yes, Sir. On the request of the State Govt. AAI is planning upgradation of Bhunter airport for 50 seater type of aircraft, which will require construction of a new Terminal Building and extension of runway. Request for additional land measuring approximately 17 acres has been placed with the state Govt. The work of construction of a bund and a retaining wall along the river Beas to check soil erosion of airport operational area has already been undertaken by AAI.

(c) and (d) The time frame for the upgradation of the airport will be decided after the state Govt. confirms the availability of the land for expansion of the airport.

Railway Projects

309. SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have declined to give its approval to some Railway projects announced for construction in the Budget 1997-98 ; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) (a) and (b) No, Sir. Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs have desired for a comprehensive note on the on-going project including those in the pipeline with their prioritisation and pattern of funding, before the projects are considered for approval.

Corruption Cases

310. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases of corruption, dishonesty and assets disproportionate to the income of civil servants investigated by the Vigilance Department of Ministry in 1995-96;

(b) the number of officers (Grade-wise) involved in the above;

(c) the number of complaints received for corruption and dishonesty in the 1995-96 and the action taken thereon;

(d) Whether the Vigilance Department initiate action suo moto against the staff suspected to be dishonest and corrupt; and

(e) whether the Ministry have made any review of the functioning of power of the vigilance section under their control and, if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) No case was investigated by the Vigilance section in the Ministry against any officer or member of staff working in the Ministry .

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) No complaint of corruption and dishonesty was received against any officer or member of staff working in the Ministry of Steel during 1995-96.

(d) The Vigilance Section in the Ministry can initiate action *suo-moto* against staff suspected to be dishonest and corrupt if *prima facie* case exists, as per procedure.

(e) Review of Vigilance work in various organisations under the Ministry is being undertaken periodically. During the current year three such reviews have taken place.

Delhi-Karachi Route

311. SHRI AJMEERA CHANDULAL :
SHRI K.P. NAIDU :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Air Traffic Controllers have pointed out that the bifurcation of the Delhi-Karachi route by the Airport Authority of India is faulty and dangerous to flight safely; and

(b) if so, the steps being taken in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATRAJAN) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Air Traffic Controllers Guild had pointed out some difficulties in implementing the bifurcated route. The bifurcation was neither faulty nor dangerous to flight safety. However, the matter has since been resolved by some marginal realignment.

D.D.P. in Rajasthan

312. COL. SONA RAM CHOUDHARY: Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government had sanctioned Desert Development Programme Project during 1997-98 for stopping further increase of sand in desert districts of Rajasthan by tree plantation;

(b) whether the State Government and the Forest Development did not prepare any project in this regard and the D.D.P. project was stopped by the Union Government and the Cluster Development project started during 1995-96 ;

(c) whether the project Aravali tree plantation being run with the financial help of Japan Government has not yet been started in the State ; and

(d) whether the Union Government are considering grant of budget, for desert districts so that spread of sand is contained and tree palntation done on priority basis in the State ?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI KINJARAPPU YERRANNAIDU):

(a) Yes, Sir. Government of India has sanctioned Desert Development Programme in Rajasthan for Watershed development which includes plantations.

(b) Desert Development Programme has not been stopped in the State of Rajasthan.

(c) Government of Rajasthan have informed that the Aravali Plantation project is being implemented in Desert districts of Sikar, Jhun Jhun, Nagaur and Pali.

(d) Government of India is regularly releasing grant to identified districts of the state to combat desertification. During current financial year, about Rs.24 crores for this purpose have been released to the State.

Review of Railway project in Maharashtra

313. SHRI SANDIPAN THORAT : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have reviewed the progress of major railway projects launched during 1996-97 in Maharashtra ;

(b) if so, the details thereof and allocation of funds made for these projects during the current year, project-wise;

(c) whether the funds provided are far too inadequate for the timely completion of works resulting in cost and time escalation; and

(d) if so, the details of additional funds sought and likely to be made available ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The current status of the projects launched during 1996-97 in Maharashtra, together with the allocation made for these projects during 1997-98, are as under :

(Rs. in Crores)

Name of Project	Cost	Outlay For 1997-98	Current Status
1	2	3	4
NEW LINE			
1. Panvel-Karjat	89.00	1.00	Land acquisition for the project, which has since been cleared by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, has been completed. Work on long lead items is being taken up .
2. Ahmednagar-Beed-Parli Vaijnath	353.00	1.00	Clearance of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has been received. Land acquisition plans and papers have been submitted to the state Government and work would be progressed, once they make available the land.
GAUGE CONVERSION			
3. Jabal pur -Gondia including Balaghat	356.00	1.00	Clearance of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has been received. Final