

[Translation]

Child Labour

901. SHRI D.P. YADAV :
SHRI NARAYAN ATHAWALAY :

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether a conference of Labour Ministers of various States of the country was held in Delhi recently;

(b) whether any scheme to abolish child labour system in the country was considered therein; and

(c) if so, the details of the scheme being implemented and the details of the amount of assistance being provided for these schemes?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) to (c) A conference of States/ U.Ts. Labour Ministers was convened on 22.1.97 to finalise a concrete action plan for giving effect to the directions of the Supreme Court regarding rehabilitation of children working in the hazardous occupations and regulating and improving the working conditions in respect of children working in the non-hazardous occupation. It was decided in the conference that in the first phase survey would be conducted to identify such children working in all establishments in urban and semi urban areas and hazardous occupations in rural areas. Simultaneous action would be taken to recover an amount of Rs. 20,000/- from offending employer. State governments are also required to suitably strengthen the enforcement and monitoring machinery and ensure full compliance of the directions of the Supreme Court.

[English]

Gauge Conversion

902. SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any request has been received by the Government for conversion of Indore-Ratlam rail line into broad gauge;

(b) if so, whether any decision has been taken by the Government in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. A survey for gauge conversion of Mhow-Indore-Ratlam has been taken up at a cost of Rs. 2.8. lakhs.

(d) Does not arise.

Telephone Connection on Priority

903. SHRI UTTAMSINGH PAWAR : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of telephone connections sanctioned on out of turn priority under the discretionary power during the last three years;

(b) how many of them were installed in J&K during that period;

(c) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem captioned 'Phones to Kill' published in the 'Frontline' dated December 13, 1996 at pages 31-33;

(d) if so, the facts in this regard;

(e) whether the Government propose to hand over the case to CBI for further investigation; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) A total number of 39880 out of turn telephone connections were sanctioned under discretionary power during the last three years.

(b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) Yes Sir.

(d) Out of 26 requests of telephone connections in a single list a total of 12 out of turn telephones were sanctioned for J&K Circle on 24.1.1991 vide diary numbers 13742 to 13753 by the then Hon'ble MOS (C).

(e) and (f) The matter is under examination of the Vigilance wing of the Department of Telecommunications. Further action, as appropriate, shall be initiated as per the requirement.

Royalty Rates of Minerals

904. SHRI P.S. GADHAVI :
SHRI VIJAY PATEL :
SHRI DILEEP SANGHANI :
SHRI B.K. GADHVI :
SHRI KASHI RAM RANA :

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether an All India Mines and Geological Conference was held in December, 1996 at New Delhi;

(b) if so, the points discussed in the Conference;

(c) whether the Government propose to revise the royalty rates on minerals;

(d) if so, whether the State Governments have been consulted in this regard; and

(e) the details of revision of royalty on minerals in each category?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) and (b) Yes Sir. The main points discussed in the State Ministers/Secretaries conference of Mining & Geology was held in December, 1996 at New Delhi were (i) New guidelines for grant of large areas. (ii) Streamlining of procedure for grant of Prospecting Licences and Mining Leases (iii) Problems faced by foreign companies in obtaining mining concessions (iv) New Mineral Policy, 1993, amendments to the MM (R&D) Act, 1957, MCR, 1960 and MCDR, 1988 (v) Environmental and Forest clearances (vi) Supply of data to prospective investors (vii) Problems faced by GSI, IBM with State Governments in carrying out exploration activities (viii) Development of granite resources.

(c) to (e) The Government constituted a Study Group on 30.1.95 for carrying out detailed review of rates of royalty and dead rent applicable to major minerals (other than Coal, lignite and sand for stowing) The Study Group submitted its report in November, 1995 and the proposal for revision of rates is under consideration of the Government.

[Translation]

Relaxation of Licence Fee

905. SHRI DEVI BUX SINGH :
DR. RAMESH CHAND TOMAR :
SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to provide relaxation to Basic Telephone Service Companies in the income-tax provisions on the payment of Licence Fee;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reasons for providing special relaxation in income tax provisions by the Union Government?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) and (b) The Department of Telecommunications has recommended to the Ministry of Finance to treat the licence fee paid by the prospective operators as deductible expenditure under Section 37(i) of the Income Tax Act, as the licence fee would seem to fulfil the conditions envisaged under the said Section of the Act.

(c) As the licence fees paid has been recommended for treatment under an already existing section of the Income Tax Act, no special relaxation is being sought.

Air Traffic Services for Tourism

906. SHRI RAJESH RANJAN ALIAS PAPPU YADAV : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that in the absence of adequate and better air traffic services the development

and expansion of tourism has been affected in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) and (b) Improvement of air transport services is a continuous process which involves huge investments for fleet acquisition, construction of airports and other infrastructure facilities.

(c) Opening of the domestic sector to private airlines has injected an element of competition in aviation industry and in-turn has improved the frequency and quality of air services in the country. Indian Airlines has increased its capacity deployment by 15% and taken steps to improve the quality of services both on ground and in the air. Air India is also taking steps to improve its product, image and on-time performance to attract more passengers and to improve revenue. New destinations have been added in the recent past to improve passenger satisfaction. Airports Authority of India is planning to spend Rs. 3490 crores during 9th five year plan period for upgrading various airports. Number of Charter flights are landing at various tourist destinations consequent upon liberal charter policy of the Government.

[English]

Improvement in Outlay on Tourism

907. SHRI YELLAIAH NANDI :
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Planning Commission has been urged by the Ministry to improve the outlay on tourism for allocation in the Ninth Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, the total amount suggested for inclusion in the Ninth Five Year Plan;

(c) the extent to which the Planning Commission has agreed to the proposal of the Ministry;

(d) whether tourism promotion has been given top priority in the Ninth Five Year Plan; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Rs. 5780.00 Crores.

(c) to (e) The Ninth Plan has not been finalised by the Planning Commission.