

investment in equity would be normally limited to 50%, enhanced equity holding could be cleared on case to case basis.

Amendments to the Mines & Minerals (Regulation & Development) Act, 1957 have also been effected to facilitate foreign equity participation. The application for grant of Mineral Concessions have to be made before the State Governments only. The Central Government does not monitor receipt of such application by the State Governments.

Telephone Connections in Metro Cities

2936. DR. RAMESH CHAND TOMAR : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the difference between demand and supply of new telephone connections in the four metropolitan cities of the country; and

(b) the scheme formulated by the Government for providing telephone connections to the person in the waiting list?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) The difference between demand and supply of new telephone connections (i.e. waiting list) in the four metropolitan cities of the country as on 31-01-97 are as given below:

Name of Metro City	Difference between Demand and Supply
1. Mumbai	55626
2. Delhi	38941
3. Calcutta	77961
4. Chennai	95452

(b) For providing telephone connections to the persons in the waiting list, the following targets are proposed during 1996-97

Name of Metro City	Targets for 1996-97
1. Mumbai	2,50,000
2. Delhi	2,50,000
3. Calcutta	55,000
4. Chennai	75,000

Further, the targets are proposed to be fixed for 1997-98 such that the waiting list as on 31-03-97 is likely to be covered progressively during 1997-98.

[English]

Gauge Conversion

2937. SHRI MURALIDHAR JENA :
SHRI THOMAS HANSDA :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the total existing length of narrow gauge lines, zone-wise; and

(b) the length out of that proposed to be converted into broad gauge during the current year and next three years, zone-wise and State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) The total length (Route Kilometres) of narrow gauge lines zone-wise is as follows:

Railway	Length of narrow gauge line (Route Kilometres) (as on 31.3.96)
Central	996
Eastern	132
Northern	260
North Eastern	-
Northeast Frontier	87
Southern	102
South Central	-
South Eastern	1,340
Western	877
	3,794

(b) In the current year 46 kilometres of narrow gauge line would be converted to broad gauge, 28 kilometres on South Eastern Railway in Maharashtra and 18 kilometres on Southern Railway in Karnataka. In 1997-98, 111 kilometres are targetted for completion on South Eastern Railway in Maharashtra. The lines to be converted in 1998-99 and 1999-2000 have not yet been decided.

Conversion of Bitragunta Steam Loco Shed

2938. SHRIMATI LAKSHMI PANABAKA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received some representations regarding conversion of major steam loco shed at Bitragunta under South Central Railway into electric loco shed or workshop;