

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
	<b>3,794</b>

(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;

(b) if so, whether the Government are considering to convert above steam loco shed into the electric loco shed or workshop;

(c) if so, the time by which final decision in this regard is likely to be taken; and

(d) if not, the reasons for not utilising the present infrastructure of above steam loco shed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No Sir. Railway workshop/ Electric Loco Sheds are set up keeping in view the Railways' requirement of rolling stock and their maintenance in specific region. The existing facilities in the region are considered adequate to meet the Railways' requirement and as such there is no plan to convert steam loco shed at Bitragunta into a workshop/ electric loco shed.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Space available in the loco shed is being utilised for other operational activities.

#### **Construction of Balurghat-Eklakhi Railway Line**

2939. SHRI SUBRATA MUKHERJEE : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have fixed any target date for completion of construction of Balurghat-Eklakhi railway line;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Completion of the project would depend upon the availability of resources. In view of the throwforward of about Rs. 12000 crs. for new line projects and the need to accord priority to projects required on urgent strategic/operational considerations and those projects nearing completion, it is not possible to determine the funds which can be allocated to this project over the coming years, in view of the very limited allotment of funds for new lines by the Planning Commission each year.

#### **Expenditure Incurred on Advertisements**

2940. LT. GENERAL SHRI PRAKASH MANI TRIPATHI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the amount spent on advertisements during 1996-97

in newspapers for informing the public about opening ceremonies with regard to newly opened zones or like functions;

(b) whether it has lead to an increase in freight traffic and profit to the Railways; and

(c) if so, the details, thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) An amount of Rs. 3,68,37,676/- approx. has been spent by Railways on advertisements during 1996-97 for publicity of opening ceremonies through the newspapers.

(b) and (c) Publicity through the print media on inaugural functions/opening ceremonies, etc. serves the purpose of informing the public about the new facilities for realising the goal of optimum use of the facilities/ opportunities so that the benefits to the users and consequently to the Railways is accrued. The quantification of the advantages is, however, not possible.

#### **Train Drivers on Strike**

2941. KUMARI UMA BHARATI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Train Drivers of Samastipur Division of North Eastern Railway had gone on an indefinite strike recently due to which train services were paralysed;

(b) if so, the reasons for the said strike;

(c) the amount of loss suffered by the Railways due to said strike; and

(d) the efforts made by the Government to end the strike?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (d) No, Sir.

However, due to resentment of some Drivers of Samastipur Division over the issue of new crew link, some inconvenience took place in running the trains. The matter was, however, sorted out immediately and normal running of trains restored.

#### **Establishment of Coaching Complex**

2942. SHRI N. DENNIS : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have proposal to establish a coaching complex in the Southern Railway; and

(b) if so, whether the long standing demand of the people of Nagarcoil in this regard is likely to be considered by establishing the same there?