

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) and (b) Air India has introduced a once weekly service between Bangalore and Dubai/Muscat effective from 30th October, 1996. Indian Airlines has also introduced a twice weekly service on Bangalore - Muscat - Sharjah route effective from 2nd December, 1996.

(c) Requests are received from time to time to airtel Bangalore with important cities in the world.

(d) Air India already operates three flights a week to London/New York from Bangalore via Bombay and two flights a week directly from Bangalore to Singapore. Indian Airlines also plans to introduce a thrice weekly service from Bangalore to Singapore. Connections to other important destinations are provided over Bombay.

Airport at Raichur

2978. SHRI RAJA RANGAPPA NAIK : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that a Survey Team visited the Raichur airport project on February 3, 1997;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the survey report has been received by the Government; and

(d) the action proposed to be taken by the Government to ensure speedy sanctioning of airport at Raichur?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) to (d) Raichur Airfield belongs to the State Government of Karnataka. There is a fair weather strip and no other infrastructural facilities are available. A team of Officers surveyed the airfield and their report is being examined by the Airports Authority of India.

Linking of Tribal Areas with State Capital by double Rail Line

2979. SHRI N.J. RATHWA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of districts in Gujarat particularly in tribal areas which are linked with the state capital by double railway line till date;

(b) the names of those districts which are not linked by rail with the state capital;

(c) whether the Government propose to link these districts by rail with the State Capital;

(d) if so, the detail thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Godhra, Vadodara, Bharuch, Surat and Valsad.

(b) to (d) All districts have railway lines which are linked with the state capital.

(e) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Amount Spent on Advertisements

2980. SHRI RAM TAHAL CHAUDHARY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the announcement made by the Government regarding the new works and their inauguration is advertised on full page or half page in the newspapers;

(b) if so, the number of such advertisements given during the last six months and the amount spent thereon; and

(c) the steps being contemplated by the Government to check such wasteful expenditure?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Yes, Sir. Publicity through the newspaper advertisement is being done depending upon the importance the works/projects for the benefit of rail users.

(b) About 73 advertisements were published in the newspapers by the Railways and an amount of Rs 2,62,68,223/- has been spent for the same by them.

(c) Railway Advertisements are normally released at DAVP rates which are comparably lower than the commercial rates of the newspapers. Such advts. in the newspapers are normally restricted to only major events/projects having national relevance and in such cases proper care is taken to restrict the number of papers so as to keep the expenditure within the available funds.

Introduction of Train Between Delhi and Abu Road

2981. SHRI PARASRAM MEGHWAL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether keeping in view the importance of tourist and religious centre Mount Abu and due to the heavy rush of religious people to visit this place, the Government propose to introduce a fast train like 'Shatabdi Express' or Inter city Express between Delhi and Abu Road;

(b) if so, the time by which it is likely to be introduced; and

(c) if not the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (c) Considering the distance between Delhi and Abu Road of over 740 Kms., single line section & speed, it would not be operationally feasible to run a Shatabdi Express/Intercity between the two points.

[English]

Cancellation of Contracts for Maintenance of Railway Station

2982. SHRI K. PARASURAMAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have taken decision to cancel all contracts for maintenance of major railway stations in the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the alternative measures the Government propose to take for maintenance of major railway stations in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) to (c) In 1993, a scheme for beautification-cum-maintenance in lieu of sole advertisement rights had been introduced at a few important stations on Indian Railways. The scheme has been discontinued as it had been decided that petty maintenance work will be done departmentally.

Village Public Telephone Project

2983. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Department of Communications is thinking of placing additional equipment orders to a few vendors in an attempt to meet the target for its Village Public Telephone Project for 1996-97;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the present status of the project;

(c) whether the target for VPT for 1996-97 was set at 75000;

(d) if so, whether the target has been achieved;

(e) if not, the reasons therefor and the shortfall noticed; and

(f) the steps proposed to be taken to meet the target for Village Telephone Project?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. There is no such proposal under consideration at present.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The actual achievement of the target will be known after 31.3.1997.

(e) Does not arise in view of (d) above.

(f) All efforts are being made to meet the targets for Village Public Telephone Project within the scheduled time.

[Translation]

Shortage of Worker in P.F. Office

2984. SHRI KASHI RAM RANA : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the official work of Employment Provident Fund Office, Surat is being adversely affected due to shortage of class III and IV employees;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of class III and IV employees working at present in the said office and the number of those required; and

(d) the steps taken to appoint requisite number of employees?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) to (d) All the 21 Group 'D' posts sanctioned for the Sub-Regional Provident Fund Office at Surat and filled. Of the 216 Group 'C' posts sanctioned for the office (including 68 posts sanctioned during 1996-97), 126 are presently filled. While shortage of staff affects normal functioning of the office, the organisation has been trying to ensure that the work relating to service to the subscribers continues satisfactorily. The Employees, Provident Fund Organisation has initiated necessary action to fill the vacant posts according to the prescribed procedure.

T.V. Studio, Patna

2985. SHRI R.L.P. VERMA :
PROF. RITA VERMA :

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to refer to reply given to Unstarred question No. 3467 on August 29, 1996 regarding TV Studio, Patna and state:

(a) whether all the formalities regarding commissioning of said TV studio have since been completed;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons for delay and the time by which it is likely to be started;

(d) the loss incurred by the Government due to closure of the above studio;