

the matter of development and operation of postal services in the country. The salient features of the policy of the department are indicated below :

In the matter of expansion of postal network in the rural areas, the department's policy provides for substantial subsidy in respect of new post offices - 66% of anticipated cost in normal rural area and 85% of the anticipated cost in hilly, tribal and inaccessible area as well as allows the maximum permissible annual loss to the extent of Rs 2400/- in normal rural area and Rs.4800/- in tribal and hilly areas in the matter of upgradation of rural Branch Post Office into a Departmental Sub Post Office. 8041 villages including Gram Panchayats in the country, where opening of a post office is justified according to population and distance parameters are still without postal counter facilities and the focus of department's policy now is to provide new post offices in these villages. In extending postal facilities in the urban area financial viability is given greater importance in the department's policy and a newly opened post office is required to be self-supporting by the end of its first year of existence. Parameter in respect of distance from existing post office is also appropriately related to urban conditions where the density of population is much higher than in the rural area.

As regards delivery service in rural area, the norm is to deliver articles from Branch Post Office on the same day when these are received unless there are constraints of transmission arrangements. In the urban area, all departmental delivery office provide atleast one delivery per day for both ordinary and accountable articles, which are supplemented by more than one delivery in a large number of urban post offices, having regard to the volume of articles and the time of their receipt.

In the matter of all mail transmission, the department's policy is to gradually introduce automated systems in the large nodal centres for speedy and effective mail processing. The first step in this direction has been taken with the setting up of the automated mail processing centres at Mumbai and Chennai respectively.

The department is also pursuing the policy of optimising the benefits of the post office as an outlet of social distribution system by performing a variety of agency functions like small savings schemes of the Government, payment of pension for Railway Pensioners and Coal Miners, as also operation of the Postal Life Insurance Organisation.

The department's policy of modernising the postal service lays emphasis on counter services where application of computer-based technology is aimed at achieving greater customer satisfaction through more efficient and responsive counter service and enhancing employee motivation through improved work-environment. Provision of new value-added services for the business/professional segment of customers is also in focus for optimising the upgraded retailing capacity of modernised postal counters. Computer based technologies are also being introduced in other areas of activity like financial services, PLI, inventory control and speed post Service.

The department's policy of modernisation through induction of new technology is being achieved on the basis of an extensive training programme aimed at upgrading the skills of its employees.

The department is also seeking to segment its areas of activities catering for business and commercial sector and those for meeting universal service obligation with a view to improving quality of service and generation of revenue.

[English]

Sliding of Sales and Profit in Steel Sector

3050. SHRI SYDAIAH KOTA :
SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO :

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that sales and profit of steel sector have been sliding;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the targets fixed by the Government for earning profit from the public sector steel plants during 1996-97;

(d) the actual profit earned by each of the steel plants during the said period;

(e) whether the steel plant under SAIL has not earned profit as it was expected at the beginning of the year; and

(f) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) and (b) Among the main steel producers, 'sales' and 'profits before tax' of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) and Tata Iron & Steel Company Limited (TISCO) have been steadily increasing for the last three years. As regards Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd. (RINL), the 'sales' have been increasing and the losses incurred by it have been decreasing for the last three years.

(c) Target of Profit in SAIL, for the year 1996-97, is Rs. 825 crores. While the net loss in RINL, for the year 1996-97 is targeted to be brought down to Rs. 272.69 crores.

(d) The actual profit earned by the steel plants during 1996-97 will be known only after the close of the current financial year.

(e) and (f) Do not arise in view of (d) above.

Facilities to Passengers at Chunar Railway Station

3051. SHRI S. P. JAISWAL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received

representations for providing facilities to passengers at Chunar Railway Station;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government are aware that some social organisations staged Dharana and demonstrations in 1995 and 1996 demanding halt for some important trains at the said station to provide reservation quota in these trains and to construct a rail overbridge there;

(d) if so, the details of action taken in this regard; and

(e) the time by which the passenger facilities as demanded are likely to be made available at the said railway station?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A memorandum was received from Nagrik Upbhokta Samiti Chunar, regarding stoppage of Magadh, Katihar, Neelachal Expresses and Kalka Mail at Chunar Railway station.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e) Neelachal Express does not touch Chunar Railway station. However, the feasibility of providing stoppage of additional trains, including Magadh Express, Mahananda Express and Kalka Mail at Chunar has been examined, but not found commercially justified. In the absence of stoppage of these trains, no quota can be allotted at this station. Construction of Road-over bridge is not feasible at the site, however, a Foot-over bridge can be considered if the State Govt. sponsor proposal on deposit terms.

Loading of Loaded Trucks on Rail Wagons

3052. SHRI VIJAY PATEL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to allow loaded trucks on rail wagons; and

(b) if so, the time by which it is likely to be implemented?

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

(b) The question of implementation will arise only after various aspects of the proposal have been examined.

Rail Link with Bangladesh

3053. SHRI UDDHAB BARMAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are considering to increase trade with Bangladesh from different parts of West Bengal;

(b) whether the Government are aware that from North Bengal to Bangladesh, Traffic movement is possible by

constructing rail link with Chilahati (Bangladesh) to Raninagar via Haldibari;

(c) whether the Government are also considering to take up this project;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

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

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

Rail Link with Kabithirtha Churulia

3054. SHRI MEHBOOB ZAHEDI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have since taken any decision to connect Kabithirtha Churulia in district Bardhaman, West Bengal, birth place of revolutionary poet Nazrul Islam, with rail;

(b) if so, whether the Government propose to conduct any survey for this propose;

(c) if so, when and the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

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

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Churulia Station was in existence on Ikhra-Gaurandi Section in Asansol Division on Eastern Railway. On account of rampant theft of railway track it was not found feasible to run trains on this section, and the section was closed in 1985. Churulia is connected by road to Asansol.

On-going Construction of Over-Bridges in Orissa

3055. SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some road over-bridges are under construction in Orissa;

(b) if so, the location of these bridges;

(c) the estimated cost likely to be incurred thereon; and

(d) the progress of work made so far?

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

(b) to (d) A Statement is attached.