

regard. So, let the flaring be brought to zero and the gas be utilised for the benefit of the consumers. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAM NAIK: It is an admitted fact that the gas is being burnt on a very massive scale and it is a national loss. My specific question is this : since the Government is not able to restrict that and utilise that for any productive purpose so far, I want to know if any Indian private enterprise comes forward to use that – in view of the Government's general policy of privatisation – whether the Government will consider such proposals of giving that gas for the use by the private parties. This is my specific question and he did not reply to that.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: I have just now given the scheme which is undertaken by the Government. In the event of failure of this scheme, perhaps, the suggestion made by the hon. Member will be considered.

EMU Services in Calcutta

*417. **SHRI SATYAGOPAL MISRA:** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that EMU services of the Calcutta suburban sections have become irregular and daily passengers have to face difficulties as a result thereof;

(b) if so, the reasons therefore; and

(c) the details of the steps taken/proposed to be taken to run the local trains regularly?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) and (b). With the exception of Howrah-Kharagpur section, punctuality of suburban trains in Calcutta area has been averaging about 95%.

(c) Running of these trains is being monitored intensively.

SHRI SATYAGOPAL MISRA: Sir, I totally disagree with the answer given by the hon. Minister that there is 95 per cent punctuality of suburban trains in Calcutta. I myself am a daily passenger of those trains in that area and I do not know from where he has collected this information or data. However in his reply, he has admitted that in Howrah-Kharagpur section there is some irregularity in running the trains.

May I know from the Hon. Minister what is the percentage of punctuality in the Howrah-Kharagpur section?

What are the reasons for late running of trains in that section?

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: Sir, in the South-Eastern Railway, that is, the Howrah-Kharagpur Section, the punctuality of trains used to be around 94 per cent in 1988-89. Currently, it is in the range of 90 per cent. It was affected by factors like frequent power-cuts trippings on account of irregular supply from West Bengal State Electricity Board.

SHRI SATYAGOPAL MISRA: The Hon. Minister is misleading the House because that is not a fact. In this area, Kolaghat Thermal Power Project is there. They are supplying electricity regularly to the South-Eastern Railways.

Now he is passing on all the responsibility to the State Government. The actual fact is that there is more than 100 per cent congestion in the Howrah-Kharagpur section in the trains. Can the Minister deny it? Sir, what is the remedy?

MR. SPEAKER: Please ask a specific question.

SHRI SATYAGOPAL MISRA: There is a necessity for construction of fourth railway line from Santragachi to Panskura and third railway line from Panskura to Kharagpur to avoid the congestion. Otherwise the problem of congestion cannot be overcome. May

I know from the Hon. Minister his reaction in this regard?

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: I do not have to answer this question. It is only about the punctuality of the trains.

MR. SPEAKER: Now second supplementary. Mr. Misra, you formulate the question. I will ask him to reply.

SHRI SATYAGOPAL MISRA: Sir, I am saying about the over-congestion. Over-congestion is the main reason for late running of trains. What is the going to do for construction of the fourth railway line which is required to solve the problem of over-congestion?

MR. SPEAKER: Is there any plan to overcome the over-congestion?

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: Sir, the over-congestion in the suburban trains is the obvious fact of reality. So far as the coming it over is concerned, there is no proposal. But whatever existing facilities we have, we have to go ahead with that. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH: Sir, I am another daily passenger in that section. The reply of the Minister does not corroborate our experience. Every day, we find late running of trains. There is a possibility of deterioration of law and order in this section because of unrest among the daily passengers. We are repeatedly asking the authorities for regular running of the trains but without any result.

The question is that from Howrah to Bargachia and from Howrah to Kharagpur, there are not sufficient local trains, and regular timings for running of the trains.

There is also the problem of platforms at Howrah railway station.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Hannan Mollah, you ask a question. Otherwise, he will say that he will not reply.

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH: I am asking the question. Are they going to open a new platform at Howrah station?

Are they also going to arrange the regular running of the trains between Kharagpur and Howrah and Howrah and Bargachia? One more platform is urgently required.

MR. SPEAKER: Are you going to construct one more platform at Howrah?

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: There is no scheme to create one more platform at Howrah is addition to four platforms already coming up.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Sir, I would be very specific and I want a specific answer. Is the Government aware of the fact that there is no punctuality in the running of trains between Bongaon and Sealdah in the Eastern Railways since a long time past?

Is it because of the fact that the proposal of doubling of the track between Barasat to Bongaon has been delayed so long?

Is it also due to the fact that there has been no proposal yet taken up by the Government for the remodelling of the Sealdah station. Would the hon. Minister reply to these specific questions?

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: Sir, so far as the doubling is concerned, it does not interfere with the punctuality of the trains running there at the moment and so far as modernisation of Sealdah station is concerned, it will be taken up in future plans and not at the moment. We have already taken note of it.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: The EMU coaches of the first class compartments in Eastern Railways have been withdrawn. But they are still continuing in South-Eastern Railways. There is no difference between the first class and second class compartments. May I know from the hon. Minister as to whether or not the first class compartment in South-Eastern Railways, in between Howrah and Kharagpur section, will be with-

drawn as it has been withdrawn in Eastern Railways?

My second part of the question is that there is a long standing demand from the passengers of Burdwan-Asansol section to declare it as a suburban section and introduce EMU coaches there. So, may I know from the hon. Minister as to whether or not the Government will consider to declare Burdwan-Asansol section as a suburban section and introduce EMU coaches there in future?

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: So far as the existing facilities of the South-Eastern Railways are concerned, they will continue to be there. Regarding the other part of the question, i.e., making Asansol-Burdwan section as suburban section, it is not feasible at this moment because of the production constraints of the EMUs.

SHRI ANIL BASU: Sir, one of the main reasons for the late running of trains is congestion in the lines and the hon. Minister, during his reply, said that it is an obvious factor. The line capacity of the suburban section has not been augmented since the last so many years. I would like to know as to how much investment has been made in Howrah-Bundel suburban section during the last five years to augment the line capacity of the trains so that they can run in a regular manner.

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: I do not have the figures about the investment at the moment. *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You will get it in writing.

SHRI ANIL BASU: Sir, he should understand that this is the real point in my question. Being the Railway Minister, he should know that the line capacity should be augmented and unless that is done, trains cannot run on time.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF): We have resources constraint. I do understand the anxiety of the

hon. Members. The question is of finding money. We have constraints on production of EMU coaches. We have constraints of additional line capacity. But we can improve certainly provided you people help us in maintaining the law and order situation and see that you will be able to run the trains on time. We have the problems of power supply and law and order situation. And we need your cooperation. Only with your cooperation, we can improve the situation.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL: Sir, in the past, demands had been made in this House regarding Bundel-Katwa line for its conversion from single line into double line and also for electrification of that line. Even the other day, during the debate of the Railway Budget, the demand was made. May I know from the hon. Minister as to how and when will this conversion of Bundel-Katwa line into double line be made? When is the electrification of Bundel-Katwa line going to be implemented?

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: We are examining it.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY: Sir, my question is the same question regarding electrification of Bundel-Katwal line and it is connected with this question because it is also a suburban section.

Since no improvement has taken place, I thought of putting this question. By asking this question, we are giving an opportunity to the hon. Railway Minister to really do some service to the people of that area, which is being neglected for long. We will be very happy if you can now say something concrete.

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: I do understand the anxiety of my friend Shri Saifuddin Choudhury. As I said, we are very sympathetic. We are examining the proposal and we have sent it to the Planning Commission. As and when it comes, we will take action.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHURY: What is the legal interpretation of 'sympathy'? What

is the meaning of this word 'sympathetic'?

MR. SPEAKER: Well, I shall have to give you a poetic interpretation.

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA: Sir, I have a supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER: Andaman is not in Calcutta!

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA: Every member of this House has a right to put a supplement Sir.

Gandhar Gas Based Power Project

*421. SHRI HARIN PATHAK: Will the Minister of POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Electricity Authority has given approval of 615 MW Gandhar Gas based power project with 2.25 mcmd requirement of gas; and

(b) if so, whether there is any proposal to change it to 1.5 mcmd?

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI KALP NATH RAI): (a) and (b). Two gas based projects of 615 MW each at Gandhar have been techno-economically cleared by the Central Electricity Authority, subject to certain conditions including confirmation of availability of 2.25 million cubic meters per day (MCMD) of gas for each of these two projects from the Gandhar gas fields. Currently both projects have a gas linkage of 1.5 MCMD each for operation on a variable load basis.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, according to the hon. Minister the Central Electricity Authority has cleared two gas based projects of 615 MW capacity each at Gandhar with some conditions. Through you,

I would like to know from the hon. Minister the conditions put forth by the Central Electricity Authority while clearing the projects?

SHRI KALP NATH RAI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, after the presentation of the feasibility report by the State government, the Central Electricity Authority granted techno-economic clearance. Oil and Natural Gas Commission had promised to make available 2 million cubic meters of natural gas from the Gandhar gas fields. On that basis techno-economic clearance and environmental clearance was given before clearing the scheme finally and for the scheme the NTPC decided the allocation of funds to be made.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, secondly, for both the projects 1.5-1.5 M.C.M.D. gas leakage is available on the basis of operation on variable load principle, though the demand is of 2.25 million cubic metres per day. Sir, through you, I would like to know from the hon. Minister the date by which the demand of supply of 2.25 million cubic metres of gas per day is likely to be met. *

SHRI KALP NATH RAI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, ONGC declared the availability of natural gas in abundance in Gandhar area but later on retracted from their earlier stand and said that actual availability is short of expectations. Therefore, on the basis of 1.5 million cubic metres of supply of gas to each project, clearances were issued to set up two projects of 615 MW capacity each by NTPC and Gujarat State Electricity Board respectively.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: My question is about the supply of precondition of 2.25 million cubic metres of gas to each project and whether the Government propose to fulfill the precondition? In case of non-fulfilling of precondition, whether the clearance to the projects will be given or not?

SHRI KALP NATH RAI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government is ready to fulfill the precondition, but ONGC gave an assurance to make available the natural gas but later on