

(e) Two Permanent Way Inspectors have been taken up under Railway Servants (Discipline & Appeal) Rules.

[English]

Increase in Inventory of Steel Products

2975. SHRI AMAR PAL SINGH : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether there has been substantial increase in the inventory of steel products at various stockyards of the Steel Authority of India Limited during the current financial year so far;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reasons identified therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. There has been increase in inventory of steel products at various stockyards of Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL) during the current financial year. The details are as under :-

Stocks in Stockyards in '000 Tonnes

| | | |
|-----------------|---|-------|
| As on 1.4.1996 | - | 404.4 |
| As on 1.12.1996 | - | 840.7 |

(c) The main reason for inventory build up is the subdued demand situation which, in turn, depends on interplay of a number of factors such as availability of funds with consumers, cost of credit, competition from domestic sources as well as imports, overall industrial growth etc.

Gauge Conversion

2976. SHRI K. PARASURAMAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have taken decision on the conversion of metre gauge railway lines into broad gauge in various parts of the country during the Ninth Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is any such proposal for the Railway line between Chengalpattu Junction and Arakonam Junction via Kancheepuram;

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

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

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

(b) The details have not yet been finalized.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) During the Ninth Plan.

(e) Does not arise.

Train Accidents Occurred in Bilaspur Division

2977. SHRI MANHARAN LAL PANDEY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of train accidents occurred in Bilaspur division between July 1, 1996 and October 30, 1996;

(b) the total loss suffered by Railways due to these accidents;

(c) the number of passenger trains/goods trains which were deferred for a long time during this period;

(d) whether priority is given by Bilaspur division to goods trains as compared to passenger trains; and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) There were three consequential train accidents in Bilaspur Division during the period 1.7.96 to 30.10.96.

(b) The approximate cost of damage to railway property is Rs. 1.77 crores.

(c) As a result of these accidents, four passenger trains were cancelled, three terminated short of destination, one express train was run via a diverted route and 70 goods trains suffered detention.

(d) Passenger trains are given precedence over goods trains as per laid down operating procedure.

(e) Does not arise.

Entry of International Media

2978. SHRI N.K. PREMCHANDRAN :
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :
SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN :
SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV :

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to allow the entry of foreign players into the print of electronic media;

(b) whether his Ministry has permitted uplinking signals from Indian soil by private TV operators to foreign satellite;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether recently any private operator uplinked signals from Indian soil;

(e) whether a meeting was held in September 1996 to allow entry of foreign media in the country;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) Regarding Electronic Media, the Government is in the process of enacting legislation on

broadcasting which interalia would address the issue of entry of foreign holding in the broadcasting companies.

As far as print media is concerned, the entry of foreign print media in the country is regulated by a Cabinet Resolution of 1955 which prohibits :-

- (i) Publication of foreign owned newspapers and periodicals in the country;
- (ii) Publication of Indian editions of foreign newspapers/periodicals dealing mainly with news and current affairs;

The Government continues to be guided by this policy which has neither been changed nor rescinded.

(b) and (c). This Ministry has not permitted any private TV operator to uplink signals from Indian soil to foreign satellite.

(d) This Ministry is not aware of any such uplinking.

(e) to (g). Meeting held in September, 1996 was a part of the process of consultation being held with various political parties on the issues relating to Prasar Bharati and Broadcasting Law. A questionnaire was also sent to leaders of various political parties and only a few of them have responded so far. After taking these views into consideration, a Broadcasting Bill will soon be introduced in the Parliament.

[Translation]

Computer Reservation Services

2979. SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Barauni has not so far been linked with Calcutta regarding computer reservation services; and

(b) if so, the time by which computer reservation services at Barauni are likely to be linked with the entire country?

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

(b) Barauni is connected with the main computer system of Delhi. There is no proposal at present to link it with any other system.

[English]

Zinc Trade Agreement

2980. SHRI JAGATVIR SINGH DRONA : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Hindustan Zinc Limited have any trade agreements with France and two Australian Companies for mining; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) As part of Hindustan Zinc Limited (HZL)'s longterm strategy

to diversify into different fields of business, three Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) have been signed with leading foreign Parties, viz., BHP Minerals, Australia, Nuigini Mining Limited (NML), Australia, and BRGM, France/VMC, Vietnam, for the exploration and if found viable, exploitation of base and precious metals in India and abroad.

(b) The MoU with BHP Minerals is for grass-root exploration for Lead, Zinc, Copper and Gold and associated minerals in Rajasthan.

The MoU with NML is for exploration and if found viable, exploitation of identified gold prospects in India.

The MoU with BRGM (France) and VMC, now restructured as Vietnam Gem and Gold Corporation (VIGEGO), is for exploration and, if found viable, exploitation of Pac Lang Gold prospects in Vietnam.

[Translation]

Employment on Compassionate Ground

2981. DR. G.R. SARODE : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the employment on compassionate ground is provided in Railways;

(b) if so, the number of details of such employment provided in Bhusaval Division under Central Railway during the last three years;

(c) the number of such cases pending in Bhusaval Division; and

(d) the time by which these cases are likely to be cleared?

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

(b) and (c). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

(d) The extant instructions require the Zonal Railways to make all out efforts to provide compassionate appointments to all eligible persons as early as possible within the guidelines laid down for the purpose. It is, however, difficult to fix any time limit for the appointments on compassionate grounds, as the same depends on several factors like availability of suitable vacancies, wards attaining majority etc.

[English]

Telephone Connections

2982. SHRI PRAKASH VISHWANATH PARANJPE : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) list of telecom districts having more than 10,000 telephone connections with waiting list;