

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the steps proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard;

(c) whether Talwar Committee constituted for this purpose has submitted its report; and

(d) if so, the time by which a decision is likely to be taken for implementation of its recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) The Postal Department has been utilising the services of ED Agents for providing Postal services in the Country-side where the traffic density is too low to justify the management of Departmental employees. From time to time the ED Agents have been pressing for improving their service condition through their recognised Unions and as such we are aware of their demands.

(b) The details of the demands are given in the statement which have been considered in detail by Justice Talwar Committee appointed by the Government in this behalf.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) As per an agreement entered into by the Department with the ED Agents Union the Talwar Committee Report is to be first discussed by a Committee comprising of their Union representatives, DOP&T and Ministry of Finance. As such a final decision on the recommendations contained in the Report would be possible only after these modalities are completed. Discussions with the EDAs Unions have been already initiated in this behalf and all possible steps are being initiated to take final decision on the report.

Statement

Demands of ED employees put forward by three affiliated federations of the Deptt. of Posts are :

1. To declare that the ED Agents including applicants are entitled to get appropriate scales of pay and proportionate wages equal to their corresponding counterparts in the regular establishment to evolve suitable scheme for payment of equal pay for equal work.
2. To declare that the ED Agents being holders of civil posts are entitled to get all service benefits including scales of pay, annual increments and promotions, pension, earned leave, casual leave, LTC, HRA and such other benefits as are granted to the regular employees in the Department and direct the Government to extend such benefits of ED Agents forthwith.
3. Grant of pensionary benefits applicable to the regular departmental staff and taking into consideration the wages paid at the time of retirements on the basis of the length of service with benefits of commutation.

4. Grant of travelling allowance, medical allowance and pay scales with periodical increments as applicable to the regular staff.
5. Payment of gratuity at the rate paid to then regular staff and upper limit so fixed at Rs. 6000/- be quashed.
6. Extension of GPF and family pension benefits to ED Agents.
7. Extension of concession of compassionate appointment to one of the dependants/near relatives of an ED Agent who dies while in service.
8. Two time-bound promotions during their service in the Department-first promotion on completion of 16 years service and second promotion on completion of 26 years service as at present, no such promotional Avenues exist in the Department.
9. Payment of subsistence allowance to the ED Agents during the put off duty period, leave with wages including maternity leave to women ED Agents.
10. To direct the Government that the entire service of the ED Agents shall be counted for the purpose of fixation of pay for grant of pension etc.

[English]

Upgradation of Maninagar-Ahmedabad-Mumbai Rail Track

1407. SHRI VIJAY PATEL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any plan to upgrade the Maninagar-Ahmedabad-Mumbai railway track in the near future; and

(b) if so, the time by which the plan is going to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) and (b) Track is already upgraded on Mumbai Central - Ahmedabad section. The maximum permissible speed of trains on Mumbai Central - Vadodara section is 120 kmph. On Vadodara - Ahmedabad section, at present the speed is 100 kmph which is proposed to be raised to 110 kmph by 31.3.98 for which trials are being conducted.

[Translation]

Rail Engines

1408. SHRI JAGDAMBI PRASAD YADAV : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the types of Rail engines available with the Railways at present, Zone-wise;