

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) and (b) Air India already has traffic rights to operate direct air services to South Africa under the India-South Africa Air Services Agreement. The services are, however, not being operated at present due to poor load factor.

Recruitment in Armed Forces

3429. SHRI HARI KEWAL PRASAD : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the strength of soldiers in all the three organs of army is adequate to meet our defence requirement; and

(b) if not, the steps being taken to increase their number ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) The strength of soldiers in all the three branches of the armed forces is adequate to meet the defence requirement.

(b) Does not arise, in view of (a) above.

Ongoing Railway Projects

3430 SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKER RAWAT :
SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN :
SHRI A. GANESHMURTHI :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of ongoing and new Railway Projects being taken up in the country, State-wise and Zone wise;

(b) the allocation of funds made against each project in the Ninth Five Year Plan and amount spent during 1996-97, 1997-98 project-wise; and

(c) the time by which these projects are likely to be completed ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK) : (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Derailment of Shramjeeve Express

3431. SHRI D.S. AHIRE :
SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of derailment of Patna-New Delhi Shramjeeve Express on the Buxar Mughalsarai section of Eastern Railway on May 21, 1998;

(b) if so, the reasons and details thereof :

(c) the number of persons killed/injured and loss of government property therein;

(d) whether any inquiry has been conducted in this regard; and

(e) if so, the findings thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. On 21st May 1998, 8 coaches of 2401 Up Shramjeevi Express derailed between Chausa and Gahmar stations of Danapur Division, Eastern Railway. The reason of this accident is track defect.

(c) One passenger sustained simple injury in this accident. The loss of Government property was estimated as Rs. 65,000/-

(d) The accident was inquired into by a Committee of Senior Administrative Grade Officers.

(e) As per findings of Enquiry Committee, the accident occurred due to buckling of track.

Expenditure Incurred on Guests of Railway Minister

3432. SHRI S. MALLIKARJUNIAH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the amount of expenditure incurred on food and refreshment for the Railway Minister and his guests during the period from December, 1994 to June, 1996 and July, 1996 to December, 1997;

(b) the amount of expenditure incurred by Railway Guest Houses, Waiting rooms and restaurants on the Railway Minister's guests in the above said period; and

(c) the manner in which this expenditure is accounted for ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK) : (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

House Rent Allowance to Armed Forces

3433. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SHINDE : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the house rent allowance as are admissible to Central Government employees are not payable to the employees of armed forces; and