

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BABAGOUDA PATIL) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Drinking water is a State subject. States are expected and also guided to plan and implement individual rural water supply schemes. The Central Government supplement the efforts of the State Governments by providing central assistance under the centrally sponsored Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme. As per the Action Plan prepared by the Government of Maharashtra all rural uncovered habitations of the State will be fully provided with safe drinking water during the Ninth Plan period, subject to availability of funds.

Passenger Amenities at Railway Stations

3312. SHRI NARENDRA BUDANIA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that passengers' amenities at the railway stations have deteriorated since the last one year;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) whether any surprise checks have been conducted to find out the factors responsible for it;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the concrete measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to streamline the passenger amenities at the railway stations ?

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) There has been no deterioration.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Regular and surprise inspections are conducted by Railway Officers and Supervisory staff at various levels in order to ensure that requisite passenger amenities are available and well maintained. As a follow up of these inspections, corrective action is being taken, where necessary. In addition, Service Improvement Groups have been constituted at important stations with a view to have a multi-disciplinary approach to the upkeep and improvement in the services provided. These Groups consist of Officers/Supervisory staff from various Departments and function at Station, Divisional and Headquarters levels.

(e) Minimum facilities have been provided at all stations. Norms based on volume of traffic at stations have been laid down for provision of various amenities viz. Waiting Hall, Sitting accommodation, drinking water, latrine and urinals, booking arrangements, water coolers, waiting rooms, covered-sheds etc. Allocation of funds for amenities are constantly being increased from year to year.

Besides, for the convenience of passengers, reserved accommodation on trains through Computerised Reservation System has been extended to 339 locations upto 31.3.1998 covering about 95% of the total reserved accommodation. Enquiry Offices are also being upgraded by providing Inter-active Voice Response System (IVRS) for telephonic enquiries, improved announcement and display systems.

Monitoring Cells at Ministry, Zonal and Divisional Railway Headquarters levels have also been set up for monitoring passenger complaints related to passenger amenities.

[Translation]

Development of Towns

3313. SHRI PRADEEP KUMAR YADAV : Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :

(a) the amount provided for development of towns during the last three years and till March, 1998 and the Plan Head under which the amount has been provided, State-wise;

(b) the amount provided by the Union Government during 1998-99;

(c) whether Uttar Pradesh has been provided inadequate funds for this purpose; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI RAM JETHAMALANI) : (a) State-wise details of Central grants for development of towns for the last three years upto March, 1998 are given in the enclosed Statements I and II.

(b) and (c) The State-wise allocation funds for 1998-99 are yet to be finalised. Therefore, no Central grants have been released so far.

(d) Does not arise.

Statement-I

State-wise release of Central grants during the last three years upto March, 1998

S.No.	State/UTs	Funds released under plan head	
		Major Head 2217- Urban Development I D S M T	Major Head 2215- Water Supply and Sanitation A U W S P
(Rupees in lakhs)			
1	2	3	4
1.	Andhra Pradesh	863.01	104.45
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	29.00	308.05

1	2	3	4
3.	Assam	151.86	94.00
4.	Bihar	195.00	94.00
5.	Goa	-	9.20
6.	Gujarat	657.52	97.30
7.	Haryana	82.00	250.88
8.	Himachal Pradesh	65.00	144.38
9.	Jammu & Kashmir	92.50	80.26
10.	Karnataka	740.34	227.54
11.	Kerala	448.25	137.39
12.	Madhya Pradesh	603.79	954.63
13.	Maharashtra	1140.99	480.85
14.	Manipur	85.50	206.03
15.	Mizoram	57.00	70.66
16.	Meghalaya	30.60	97.82
17.	Nagaland	39.00	86.69
18.	Orissa	157.00	344.99
19.	Punjab	134.00	121.76
20.	Rajasthan	464.00	715.27
21.	Sikkim	18.00	0.00
22.	Tamil Nadu	393.50	309.58
23.	Tripura	94.75	0.00
24.	Uttar Pradesh	867.00	1893.86
25.	West Bengal	531.90	71.56
26.	Dadar Nagar Haveli	5.00	-
27.	Daman & Diu	15.00	-
Total		7961.51	6807.65

Statement-II

Mega Cities-wise release of Central grants during the last three years

S.No.	City	Funds released under Plan- Major Head 3601 for financing the project & Major Head - 2217 for feasibility study & research etc.
(Rupees in crores)		
1.	Mumabi	48.89
2.	Calcutta	46.55
3.	Chennai	41.87
4.	Hyderabad	39.51
5.	Bangalore	36.88
Total		213.70

Rail Passes on Payment of Foreign Exchange

3314. SHRI JANARDAN PRASAD MISRA :
SHRI MANIBHAI RAMJIBHAI CHAUDHARY :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a decision has been taken by this Ministry to issue Railway Passes on payment of foreign exchange;

(b) if so, the reasons therefore and the date from which this decision is being implemented; and

(c) the amount of foreign exchange received by the Ministry so far after implementing this decision and the number of passes issued so far ?

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) Indian Railways had introduced a scheme called "Indrail Pass" w.e.f. 1.5.1977. Indrail Passes have been designed and introduced by the Indian Railways, especially for the convenience of foreign nationals and Indians residing abroad. An Indrail Pass can be purchased against payment of US Dollar, Pound Sterling and other convertible foreign currency.

During 1996-97 an amount of US\$ 8,15517 was earned through sale of 10,500 Indrail Passes. Another scheme for exchange of Eurotrain Explorer Pass for Indrail Pass has been initiated.

[English]

Gauge Conversion of Mungher-Sahapur-Kamal Railway

3315. SHRI ANUP LAL YADAV :
SHRI RAJ BANSHI MAHTO :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways has taken up the conversion work of Mungher-Sahapur-Kamal railway line from metre gauge to broad gauge ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) whether this railway line is proposed to be extended upto Gaya through Uttar Pradesh;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time by which the extension work is likely to be taken up and 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) and (b) Yes, Sir. Construction of rail bridge on river Ganga at Mungher has been included in the Budget 1997-98 and would be taken up