

(a) whether there is any proposal under consideration of the Government of setting up headquarters of Cold Fishery Research Centre at Champawat (U.P.); and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

[English]

Gauge Conversion

2342. SHRI K. KRISHNAMOORTHY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for not converting the main metre gauge line between Chennai to Trichy which runs through Chengalpattu Villupuram, Cuddalore, Myladuthurai Kumbalkonam and Thanjavur into broad gauge; and

(b) the steps being taken to convert this main line into broad gauge?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTRY OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) Work is in progress for conversion of Chennai-Trichy line via Villupuram and Vriddhachalam and will be completed in the current financial year. Trichy-Thanjavur is already BG. Villupuram to Thanjavur via Cuddalore has been included in the budget 1998-99 and will be taken up after the necessary clearances have been obtained.

[Translation]

Railway Wagon Factory at Barwadih

2343. SHRI INDRA NATH BHAGAT: will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether land was acquired in Barwadih, Bihar to set up a railway wagon factory and it's office had also started functioning there;

(b) if so, the reasons for shifting the said office to Gadwaroad: and

(c) the time by which the Government propose to start the railway wagon factory in Barwadih?

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) No, Sir. There was no proposal to set up a Railway wagon factory at Barwadih. However, a depot for repair of BOXN wagons has been set up and is functional at Barwadih.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) There is no Plan to set up a Railway wagon factory at Barwadih as the existing capacity of Industry is adequate to meet the wagon requirements of Railways.

[English]

Conversion of Pachora-Jamner Rail Line

2344. DR. ULHAS VASUDEO PATIL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to convert Pachora-Kamner narrow gauge line into broad gauge line;

(b) if so, the steps taken in this regard;

(c) whether there is any proposal to extend Pachora-Jamner line upto Ajanta caves; and

(d) if so, the steps taken or being taken in this regard?

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 (d) A survey for gauge conversion of Panchora-Jamner narrow gauge line into broad gauge and extension upto Ajanta Caves by construction of a 5 kms. Long new BG rail line, has been taken up.

Further consideration of the project will be possible once the results of the survey become available.

Jawahar Rojgar Yojana

2345. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether funds to the tune of Rs. 3.48 crores have been sanctioned to Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh under the Jawahar Rojgar Yojana;

(b) if so, the share of the Centre, and the State Governments;

(c) whether these funds have been allotted to the District under the second phase;

(d) whether the Centre's share of Rs. 2.69 crores have been sanctioned for various purposes; and

(e) if so, the purposes for which this has been sanctioned and how much out of this amount has been utilised by the State Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BABAGOUA PATIL): (a) to (c) An amount of Rs. 563.95 lakhs (including Rs. 290.15 lakhs as 1st instalment) of Central share has been released during 1997-98 under Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) to Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh. The State Government's share was Rs. 140.99 (including Rs. 72.54 lakhs for 2nd instalment).

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. An amount of Rs. 290.15 lakhs has been sanctioned as 2nd instalment of central share under JRY which include 269.62 lakhs for DRDA & Rs. 20.53 lakhs additional release for Village Panchayats. Jry Programme is being implemented through Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) at Village/Block/District level. The works/projects can be taken up as per the felt need of the people with the approval of the respective Panchayats for achieving its main objectives i.e. generation of employment and creation of social/economic assets for the sustained and continued benefit of the rural poor. An amount of Rs. 427.42 lakhs has been reported to be utilised by the district upto March, 1998.

Introduction of Flights from Hyderabad

2346. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is for the first time that Hyderabad-Singapore flight was introduced in the month of March, 1998;

(b) if so, whether the State Government has urged the Centre to link more countries from Hyderabad; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Request has been received from the State Government to provide air connections between Hyderabad and Kuwait, Jeddah and Kula Lumpur. Of these, services to Kuwait have since been started by Indian Airlines. The other destinations have not yet been connected due to inadequate traffic potential and/or shortage of aircraft capacity.

Foreign Investment in Mining

2347. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have a proposal to operate some mining projects in the country in collaboration with Australia;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Australia has made some offer for the purpose;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the specific mining projects proposed to be launched in collaboration with Australia?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) to (e) The Foreign Investment Promotion Board has approved the proposal for formation of a Joint Venture between BHP Minerals International Exploration Inc. Australia, a private Australian Company with Hindustan Zinc Limited, a Public Sector Undertaking under Department of Mines to prospect for base metal deposits in Rajasthan, and, if found viable, to undertake mining operations. In addition, some private Australian mining companies have been given approval by the Foreign Investment Promotion Board for investment in the mining sector through companies registered in India under the Companies Act, 1956.

[*Translation*]

Concessions to Senior Citizens by Indian Airlines

2348. SHRI SUSHIL CHANDRA VARMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Airlines provides concessions in tickets to those people who are more than 70 years of age; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?