

(c) if so, the details thereof and the criteria adopted to set-up the said unit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) Government has accorded approval for preparation of Techno Economic Feasibility Report for a new Zinc smelter by Hindustan Zinc Limited (HZL).

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise at present.

Gauge Conversion in Orissa

2385 SHRI RANJIB BISWAL:
SHRI MAHBOOB ZAHEDI:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the proposal to convert some narrow gauge (NG) lines into broad gauge are pending since long;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise, Zone-wise; and

(c) the steps taken for the conversion of these lines into broad gauge?

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

[Translation]

Fire in Goods Train

2386. SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether engine of a goods train, caught fire at Sirathu railway station on April 11, 1998;

(b) if so, the details alongwith the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the government have conducted any inquiry into this incident;

(d) if so, the findings of the inquiry committee; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to check the recurrence of such incidents?

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 & PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, on 10.4.98 electric locomotive no. 21049 type WAG-4 of a goods train caught fire near Sirathu. Fire in locomotive was controlled by engine crew with the help of fire extinguishers available in the electric locomotive and finally fire was extinguished with the help of fire brigade.

(c) to (e) Yes, Sir. The findings of the Committee established that the fire was due to an incipient fault in the windings of locomotive transformer. Steps have already been taken for monitoring the condition of the transformers to detect such incipient defects and ensuring desired timely attention.

[English]

State Ministers Conference

2387. SHRI ANIL BASU:
SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA:

Will the Minister of RURAL AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the issues of Rural Development, Panchayati Raj and Rural Housing were discussed at the meeting of State Ministers of Rural Development convened by the Union Government on May 13, 1998;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BABAGOUDA PATIL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A conference of the State Ministers of Rural Development, panchayati Raj and Rural Housing was convened on 13th May, 1998 to discuss the following agenda items:

- (i) Restructuring of Self-Employment programmes;
- (ii) Strengthening of District Rural Development Agencies;
- (iii) Jawahar Rozgar Yojana - amendments;
- (iv) Rationalisation of Employment Assurance Scheme;

- (v) Rural Housing-Beyond Indira Awaas Yojana;
- (vi) proposed amendments to the guidelines for Desert Development Programme/Drought Prone Areas Programme;
- (vii) Implementation of the Integrated Wasteland Development Projects - issues;
- (viii) From Panchayats - functioning, accountability and empowerment of Gram Sabhas;
- (ix) Financial powers to Panchayati Raj Institutions;
- (x) Issues arising out of implementation of Act 40 of 1996, and
- (ix) Transparency in the implementation of Rural Development Programmes.

(c) A draft of the decision of taken in the meeting has been sent to the Ministers who attended the meeting with a request confirm the same. The responses received are under examination. Government will take follow up action immediately on all the decisions taken.

[*Translation*]

Construction of Airport at Ajmer

2388. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a survey has been conducted for construction of an airport at Ajmer (Rajasthan) by the Government;

(b) if so, whether the approval for construction of an air strip in Saradhana Village of Ajmer has already been accorded.;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether it is not very proper to construct an airport at Ajmer keeping in view the likely participation of lakhs of pilgrims on the occasions of Urs Sharif 786 to be held there this year; and

(e) if so, the details of the programme, envisaged by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) (a) to (e) A site near the village Saradhana 20 Km. South-West of Ajmer city on Ajmer-Bewar road was identified by the Rajasthan Government for construction

of an airport in Ajmer. This site was found suitable by the Airports Authority of India (AAI). However AAI's study indicates that the project is not viable on financial parameters. In the absence of a commitment by the State Government to provide land free of cost, as required under the general policy followed by the AAI, and by the Central Government to provide budgetary support no final decision on the construction of airport at Ajmer has been taken so far. No definite time-frame can, therefore, be indicated at this stage.

[*English*]

Electrification of Trivandrum-Ernakulam Rail Route

2389. SHRI N.K. PREMCHANDRAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state

(a) the stage at which the electrification of trivandrum-Ernakulam Railway Route stands at present; and

(b) the reasons for the delay and action taken by the Government in this regard 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 & PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) The electrification of Trivandrum-Ernakulam section is not yet a sanctioned work.

(b) Does not arise.

Mentioning of Official Name of Airports

2390. SHRIMATI KRISHNA BOSE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether foreign and domestic airlines do not mention the proper name of airports at the time of their take off or touch down a particular airport, e.g. Indira Gandhi Airport in Delhi and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Airport in Calcutta; and

(b) if so, the details of the instructions issued to State-owned airlines and private airlines for encouraging them to use the official name?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) and (b) Announcement of the name of the airport during take-off or touch-down is for the sake of passenger facilitation. All airline operators are required to mention complete and proper name of the airport in these announcements. The Director General of Civil Aviation has been directed to reiterate this requirement through an advisory to all domestic/international operators.