

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG): (a) This Ministry has sanctioned Yatri Niwasas for Uttar Pradesh at Allahabad, Ayodhya and Chitrakoot.

(b) and (c) Development of Tourism Infrastructure is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments/U.T. Administrations. However, Union Ministry of Tourism provides financial assistance for specific projects identified in consultation with them depending upon their merits and the availability of funds. For 1997-98, no project for Yatri Niwas was prioritised in Uttar Pradesh. However, for the year 1998-99, the Ministry has prioritised the projects for the construction of Yatri Niwas at Kushinagar, Vrindavan, Gauchar, Chiniyalisaur and Guptkashi.

[English]

Railway Concession to Disabled

1312. SHRIMATI LAKSHMI PANABAKA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the scheme of granting railway fare concession to disabled has been modified;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the extent to which these modifications have helped the disabled?

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 certificates for grant of concession to Orthopaedically Handicapped/Paraplegic, Blind, Deaf & Dumb and Mentally Retarded persons were revised in May 1998 and acceptance of certificates in old proforma was stopped from 1.1.1999. The major changes made are provision for photograph and address of the disabled person and registration number of the Doctor on the certificate, rationalisation of period of validity of certificate for orthopaedically handicapped/paraplegic persons and increase in period of validity of certificates for others from three years to five years.

Moreover, presently these handicapped and paraplegic persons with their escorts get concession of 75% in First Class, Second Class and Sleeper Class. We have

proposed in the Budget for 1999-2000 that this concession will also be available in Air-Conditioned 3 tier and Air-Conditioned Chair Car. In addition, 50% concession will also be given in other Air-Conditioned classes.

[Translation]

Gauge Conversion

1313. SHRI FAGGAN SINGH KULESTE:
SHRI GAURI SHANKER CHATURBHUI
BISEN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of gauge conversion of Gondia-Nainpur-Jabalpur and Balaghat-Katangi railway lines;

(b) the amount spent thereon;

(c) the time by which these lines are likely to be converted;

(d) whether survey report for extension of railway line from Katangi to Tirodi has been received; and

(e) if so, the time by which the construction work is likely to be started?

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) Final Location Survey from Gondia to Padrikanj including Balaghat-Katangi has been completed and survey beyond Padrikanj is in progress. Geo-technical investigations of all the major and important bridges between Gondia and Padrikanj including Balaghat-Katangi have been completed. Formation work and ballast supply are in progress between Gondia and Balaghat and agency for construction of bridges on this stretch is under finalisation.

(b) Rs. 16.16 lakh till 31-01-1999.

(c) The work will be progressed in the coming years as per its position in the List of Priority of Gauge Conversion projects as approved by the Cabinet and subject to availability of resources.

(d) and (e) The survey is in progress. Further consideration of the project would be possible once the survey report becomes available.