

(a) whether his Ministry has taken up any scheme for the renovation of the Mecheda Railway Station on South Eastern Railway;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for delay in completing the renovation programme; and

(d) when the renovation work is to be completed ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI BANSI LAL) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The work at present in progress at Mecheda provided for construction of new station building with sufficient booking counters, waiting hall, waiting room and extension of foot-over-bridge.

(c) Construction of station building has been delayed due to labour problem

(d) While the extension of foot-over-bridge is expected to be commissioned by the end of this month, the construction of new station building is likely to be completed in about 3 months.

SHRI SATYAGOPAL MISRA : With the completion of Matangini bridge over the river Haldi and with the coming up of the Koilghat thermal power station the Mecheda Railway Station has become an important Railway Station. But the passengers in the said station are in serious trouble due to the renovation works which have started long ago. In this context I want to know from the hon. Minister whether there is any paucity of funds and whether they have received any amount from the Koilghat Thermal Power Station authorities for the renovation of the station building, when did the construction work start, what is the time likely to be taken and what is the target for completion of the work.

SHRI BANSI LAL : As I have already said, the work will be completed in about three months. The work was started at the request of the Koilghat Thermal Power Station of the West Bengal State Electricity Board to renovate the Mecheda Railway Station. The original cost of the work

was Rs. 2.73 crores, which was later on revised to Rs. 6.5 crores due to increase in the scope of work and price escalation. Some of the works such as the earthwork for bidding and yard extending the approaches and supply of track materials for the siding had to be done by the power station authorities and the work worth Rs. 3.15 crores is to be done by the Railways.

SHRI SATYAGOPAL MISRA : I am astonished at the reply given by the Railway Minister when he says that due to labour problem the work has been delayed. Actually, there is no labour problem; there is no question of labour problem. On the extension of the overbridge only six or seven people are working. Almost every day I used to go there and see that only ten to fifteen people are working in the station building and he is saying that there was labour trouble there.

I want to know what sort of labour trouble is there. Has the Railway lodged any complaint in the Assistant Labour Commissioner's office in this regard ? I say that there is no labour trouble at all.

SHRI BANSI LAL : The labour problem is that the leaders of the local union of the thermal power station, which belongs to the hon. Member's party, say that only that labour should be employed by the contractor which is recommended by that particular union. The contractor, first of all did not agree to that. Now he has agreed to that. In spite of contractor's agreeing to that only two labourers were made available. So, the only obstacle is his party.

SHRI SATYAGOPAL MISRA : The statement is incorrect.

SHRI BANSI LAL : The statement is not incorrect at all.

Import of Electric Locomotives

*492. SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to augment the production of electric locomotives in the country;

(b) whether Government propose to import electric locomotives in order to meet the requirement; and

(c) the number of electric locomotives proposed to be produced indigenously and the number of electric locomotives proposed to be imported ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir,

(c) It is proposed to manufacture 58 Electric Locomotives indigenously during 1985-86, and import about 20 proto-type High Horse Power electric locos of different designs.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO : It is to my mind a fact that electrification of railways is the main answer because it provides cheaper travel because the maintenance costs are less, safer travel because of less accidents and pollution free and fast travel. Does the Minister agree with this statement of mine ? Is it a fact that under the Sixth Five Year Plan the target of electrification was 2800 kms and upto March this year only 1824 kms could be electrified. Why is this difference between the target and the performance ? Is it true that electrification is really the answer to our problem for safer and cheaper travel ?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : It is true in respect of certain high density routes only that electrification is economical more viable and cheaper. But this would differ from route to route.

As far as electrification target is concerned, the target was approximately 2752 route kms. We completed 1522 route kms only primarily because there was a very large price escalation in the cost of inputs. Therefore, the yardstick to be taken into consideration while determining our performance is whether total allotment was spent or not. Upto 31st March, 1985 the total allotment of Rs. 422 crores in the VI the plan has been entirely spent. But because of the price escalation we could only electrify 1522 route kms.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO : In the whole situation it is very unfortunate that we have now 1000 kms from the previous Plan as a backlog in electrification. Is it a fact that under the Seventh Five Year Plan the target of electrification has been scaled down from 5000 kms to 3500 kms? It is reported that in a major policy decision recently the Railways have decided not to go in for massive electrification of the track during the Seventh Plan. Instead all out efforts would be made to rehabilitate work out track and rolling stock. What are the reasons for this change in the policy which is detrimental to safe and cheaper travel ?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : The reason for the change in policy, I would like to inform the hon. Member, is the five-letter word which spells out 'money'. That is the entire reason for the change in policy. I agree with him that it is a most unfortunate situation and I would seek his help and support in getting more money from the Planning Commission. I am sure, I will receive his support in good measure.

The target for electrification in the Seventh Plan is 3,180 route kilometres.

MR. SPEAKER : You want some lobbying for this ?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Well, through you, Sir, I am making this earnest request to the hon. Member.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Sir, the Government have adopted a policy to phase out all the steam locomotives and not a single steam locomotive has come out from the Chittaranjan Locomotive works since 1972. Hence, the number of electric locomotives should be increased. While 81 electric locomotives were produced in Chittaranjan Locomotive Works during the year 1984-85, the target for the year 1985-86 has been fixed only at 58 locos. though the CLW has the capacity to produce more locos. So, the capacity of the Chittaranjan Locomotive Works is not being fully utilised. Without utilising the full capacity of CLW, Government is going to import twenty prototype electric locomotives.

though CLW can produce the same type of locomotives. The former General Manager of Chittaranjan Locomotive Works had written a letter to the Government that particular unit could produce that particular type of locomotive...*(Interruption)*

MR. SPEAKER : Ask the question.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : I would like to know from the Minister why is it that instead of utilising the capacity of the CLW, Government is going to import 20 prototype electric locomotives. The Minister should clarify this.

MR. SPEAKER : You should have simply asked about the capacity utilisation.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Sir, the capacity of Chittaranjan Locomotive Works is 60 locomotives. There is a proposal which we have received from CLW to augment its capacity from 60 to 80 at a cost of about Rs.1086 crores. This proposal is under consideration. The target set in the Seventh Plan in the terminal year of the Seventh Plan is that the Railways should carry 350 million tonnes of freight, and to meet this, we will need an estimated capacity of about 570 locomotives for the post five year period. So, possibly, there will be need to import some locomotives. But this is a matter which is under consideration. No decision has yet been taken in this regard. Another reason for the import of prototype is that in CLW we produce locomotives of 3,600 H.P. The proposal is to import 6,000 H.P. electric locomotives so as to save on line capacity.

SHRI LALITESHVAR SHAHI : Sir, the Minister in his reply has said that due to price escalation, the electrification of a proposal route length of 2,700 kilometres has been brought down to 1,500 kilometres. I would like to know what is the period in which escalation has taken place? When was this estimate prepared and does this escalation have any relationship to the General Price Index? Or whether the prices of commodities required by Railways have increased at a higher speed than the General Price Index?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : This question does not really relate to electrification which is about import of locomotives. Therefore, I will need a separate notice in this matter. I did reply on electrification while replying to the original question on electrification. But for this I will need a separate notice.

[Translation]

SHRI JAGDISH AWASTHI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has said that it is proposed to import certain electric locomotives. I would like to know the names of the countries from which these electric locomotives are proposed to be imported as also their cost in Indian currency.

MR. SPEAKER : The Price would be known only when the deal is finalised.

[English]

Common Syllabus for Certain Foundation Courses

*493. SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Vice-Chancellors of Universities in Asia and Pacific Region have agreed to work on the proposal to have a common syllabus for certain "foundation courses" to facilitate better cooperation;

(b) if so, the details of the foundation courses;

(c) whether the said proposal will provide better learning amongst students and encourage students mobility between countries; and

(d) by when the proposal is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION (SHRI K.C. PANT) : (a) The Conference of Vice-Chancellors of Universities of the Asian and Pacific Region was convened to discuss common educational problems and to share experience of each other. During the deliberations, views were expressed about