

Conversion of Jodhpur-Jaisalmer section has been approved in principle and would be taken up after gauge conversion between Sawai Madhopur-Jodhpur via Jaipur, Phulera has been completed.

Development of roads in Calcutta

1846. PROF. SAURIN BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that most of the Central Government buildings and premises situated in Calcutta are steadily occupying road space for parking for their vehicles;

(b) whether it is also a fact that percentage-wise the space available for roads in Calcutta is much less compared to Delhi, Bombay and Madras;

(c) whether the urban development authority has been pleading with the Central Government for development of roads in Calcutta; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and action being taken to increase the areas of roads in the town with Centre's assistance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Modernisation of Rourkela Steel Plant

1847. PROF. SAURIN BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the Business Standard, Calcutta dated the 27th August, 1991 under the caption "Germans tendered out of RSP update bids";

(b) whether efforts are being made to involve the parties with much higher offer in the modernisation programme of Rourkela Steel Plant;

(c) whether the Mannesman Demag and MAN-GHH has been proved to be extremely costly with their Indian counterparts; and

(d) if so the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The price bids for 5 global packages for the Rourkela Steel Plant modernisation project have been received by the Plant authorities from various parties which include Mannesman Demag and MAN-GHH of Germany. The Plant authorities and the consultants are currently evaluating these price bids. While the most cost effective course of action would be decided upon, the details would be known after the evaluation is completed.

Availability of house financing loan at low rate

1848. PROF. SAURIN BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have received reports on the development and growth of housing industry and on increasing the numbers of houses in various metropolitan towns and cities;

(b) whether it is a fact that efforts of the Government to assist the common public to build up their own houses are deterred due to costly finance being provided by different financial institutions at a very higher rate of interest;

(c) whether Government are aware that few housing financial institutions are also charging more than 17 per cent of interest on housing loans;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) what efforts are now being made to make available cheap finance for house building?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) This information is compiled as part of the housing statistics published annually by the Government of India.

(b) to (e) The interest rates charged by Housing Finance Institutions depend upon the cost of borrowing in the market. How-