

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-

ever, HUDCO is assisted by the Govt. of finance housing projects for the poorer sections in urban and rural areas. HUDCO is interest rates range from 7 per cent for EWS category in rural areas to 16 per cent for High Income Group and Commercial housing projects. The other Housing Finance Institutions, have to structure their lending rates according to guidelines issued by the National Housing Bank.

The Reserve Bank of India have recently issued guidelines to the commercial banks prescribing rates of interest for different categories of housing loan to individual borrowers which ranges from 10 per cent to 15 per cent for loans upto Rs. 2 lakhs and 18.5 per cent for loans beyond Rs. 2 lakhs.

Housing loans upto Rs. 5000/- are also available at 4 per cent interest to families belonging to Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes, subject to their satisfying the income criteria under DRI Scheme. Scheduled commercial banks have also since been advised by RBI to charge interest rates on Housing Finance granted by them to intermediary agencies (i.e. Housing Finance Institutions, Housing Boards and other agencies) for onlending to ultimate beneficiaries at a rate of 1.5 percentage points below the minimum rate applicable for credit limits in the category of above Rs. 2 lakhs. As per the existing interest rate structure, this rate work out to 17 per cent p.a.

The interest rates on loans to be charged by housing finance institutions in respect of those loans for which they want to claim refinance from National Housing Bank (NHB) varies from 10 per cent to 15 per cent depending on quantum of loans not exceeding Rs. 2.00 lakhs. Loans beyond Rs. 2.00 lakhs are charged at minimum rate of 16 per cent by the National Housing Bank.

The National Housing Bank has introduced a scheme called Home Loan Account Scheme. This is a contractual loan linked deposit scheme. The depositors are paid 10 per cent rate of interest and the interest charged from them by the approved lending institutions for housing loan

are as follows:—

Loan Amount	Interest Rate
Upto Rs. 50,000	10.5%
50,001—1,00,000	12.0%
1,00,001—2,00,000	13.5%
Above 2,00,000	14.5%

The recent budget has announced extension of tax benefit to similar contractual saving schemes floated by HUDCO and public housing agencies. Such schemes will help to reduce the interest rates housing loans.

Purchase of inputs by Steel Authority India Limited

1849. PROF. SAURIN BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of STEEL pleased to state:

(a) whether the Steel Authority India Limited is still importing some put every year for production of steel in the country as a result thereof the import Bill is on the increase;

(b) whether some of the items finished steel are also included every year in their import bill despite the capacities of existing plants of SAIL are lying unutilised for such items;

(c) if so the details thereof; and

(d) the action being taken to reduce the import?

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

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir, SAIL in 1989 and 1989-90 were canalising agreements for the import of Hot Rolled Grills, imported the same in order to meet gap between domestic production