

- (a) the progress made in the railway line between Patan-Bhiladi;
- (b) whether she is aware about reduction in Railway facilities subsequent to conversion to broad gauge between Patan-Mehsana in North Gujarat; and
- (c) how much time her Ministry would take to provide daily two trains between Patan and Ahmedabad?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) The work of land acquisition and major bridges has been taken up for construction of new line Patan-Bhildi.

(b) During conversion, one of the level crossings has been closed as it was not feasible. Traffic of this L-xing was diverted to a nearby L-xing.

(c) 273-274 Ahmedabad-Patan passenger has been introduced from 14.02.2009. At present, there is no such proposal to introduce additional train on Ahmedabad-Mahesana-Patan section.

New trains and rail projects in Kerala

855. SHRI P. R. RAJAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps taken to start regular trains from Ernakulam-Shoranur-Ernakulam and Kottayam-Ernakulam-Kottayam; and
- (b) what is the provision for doubling of rail line from Ernakulam to Kayamkulam and by when it is proposed to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) There is no proposal to start trains between Ernakulam-Shoranur and Ernakulam-Kottayam. However, the following trains announced in the Railways Budget 2009-10 will serve the Ernakulam area also:

1. Ernakulam-Delhi Express Non-stop
2. Bangalore-Kochuveli Express
3. Mangalore-Thiruvananthapuram Express
4. Ernakulam-Goa Express
5. Bilaspur-Tirunelveli Express
6. Hapa-Tirunelveli Express
7. Extension of 2075/2076 Thiruvananthapuram-Ernakulam Jan Shatabdi Express to Kozhikode.

(b) An outlay of Rs. 100.5 crore has been proposed for the patch doublings taken up between Ernakulam-Kayankulam route. Work on these doublings is likely to be completed in next 2-3 years subject to handing over of the required land by the State Government and availability of resources.

Gauge conversion of Chhindwara-Nagpur railway line

†856. MISS ANUSUIYA UIKEY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi

(a) whether it is a fact that a lump sum amount of Rs.585 crores has been sanctioned in the months of December, January and February for Chhindwara-Nagpur gauge conversion;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the sanction order number and date etc.;

(c) the present progress of work of this project and the details thereof, item-wise and the target fixed to complete the same; and

(d) the present cost of the said gauge conversion project and whether the project, with the help of lump sum sanctioned amount would be completed prior to the scheduled time?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b)
2 Yes, Sir. Detailed estimate for Rs. 585.93 crore have been sanctioned for the work *vide* Railway Board's letter no. 2005/W-2/ SECR/GC/01 dated 15.01.2009.

(c) 50% land acquisition completed. Work on major, minor bridges, earthwork etc, taken up.

(d) The latest anticipated cost of the project is Rs.617.51 crore. An outlay of Rs.50 crore has been proposed for this work in Budget 2009-10. No target date for this work has been fixed. The project will be progressed as per availability of resources.

Promotion of Research and Development in Iron and Steel Sector

857. SHRI A. ELAVARASAN: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the scheme 'Promotion of Research and Development in Iron and Steel Sector' is still moving at snail pace without adequate fiscal allocation for the last three years;

(b) if so, the reasons for lethargic functioning of this scheme which was initiated specifically to increase steel production and to reduce dependency on the imported cooking coal;

(c) the steps taken by Government for optimum functioning of this programme and fiscal allocation estimated during the current year; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI A. SAI PRATHAP): (a) to (d)
The Ministry of Steel proposed a new scheme namely "Scheme for Promotion of Research and Development in Iron and Steel Sector" during the 11th Five Year Plan Period. On receipt of the token provision from the Planning Commission for the first year of the plan (2007-08), actions were initiated to formulate the scheme in consultation with Planning Commission and other stake holders. The Planning Commission conveyed its 'in-principle' approval for scheme on 16th June, 2008 with a budgetary provision of Rs.118.00 crore. As a follow-up, the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) Memorandum was prepared which was appraised by the EFC in its meeting held on 21.11.2008. The scheme was finally approved for implementation by Ministry of Finance on 23.1.2009, As per approval of Ministry of Finance, the scheme is to be effective from 1.4.2009. To operationalise the scheme