

(b) the details of the mega projects announced for Bihar by the former Railways Minister but the funding to which has now been discontinued;

(c) whether it is also a fact that these projects are at present undergoing a financial crunch and have been put into cold storage;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps Government proposes to take to implement these projects so that they become vehicle of development?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (d) No, Sir. The Funds are being provided to the ongoing projects as per the availability of resources. There is huge throwforward of ongoing projects with limited availability of resources.

(e) To expedite completion of projects, a number of initiatives have been taken to generate additional resources through non-budgetary measures like Public-Private Partnership, funding by State Governments and other beneficiaries. Besides, to reduce delays on account of land availability, security issues and forestry clearances, etc. meetings with State Officials are held from time to time. Contract conditions have been modified to bring in efficiency in contract management, and field units have been further empowered.

Udhampur-Qazigund railway line

1044. PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether her Ministry considers it desirable to extend the railway line from Udhampur to Qazigund as early as possible; and

(b) if so, the reasons for the construction work going on at a snail's pace?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Udhampur-Katra-Qazigund section passes through one of the most difficult terrains in the world. Himalayas being a young mountain range pose a number of geo-technical problems like swelling and squeezing of soil, heavy inflow of water inside the tunnels etc. The progress of the project had been affected and stopped for some time due to such problems. The work on Udhampur-Katra and Katra-Qazigund sections have since recommenced.

Poor condition of railway stations in Orissa

1045. SHRI KISHORE KUMAR MOHANTY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that almost all railway stations in Orissa are lacking vital infrastructural facilities;

(b) whether it is a fact that Jharsuguda railway station, which is one of the first railway stations in Orissa has been neglected for a long time and no developmental work has been carried out there causing difficulties to passengers;

(c) whether any developmental activities are undertaken by Railways in the southern Orissa especially nearby Jharsuguda railway station; and

(d) the demands submitted by Orissa Government to Railways in connection with railway improvement and new lines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) Development of railway stations including stations located in the State of Orissa is a continuous process. 36 stations in the State of Orissa have been taken up under various developmental schemes including Adarsh station scheme.

Development of Jharsuguda station as Adarsh station has also been taken up and is planned for completion by December, 2010.

(d) Demands have been received from Orissa State Government for increase in allocation to the ongoing projects and also for taking up certain projects in the State.

Increase in price of forging quality steel

1046. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the prices of forging quality steel have risen much more than increase in prices of inputs required for steel making;

(b) whether according to experts, direct impact of this hike of around Rs. 6600/- per metric tonnes on the price index will be about 1.55 per cent which would ultimately affect common man apart from rendering Indian forging industry uncompetitive in global pricing and set back to export; and

(c) if so, the remedial steps Government proposes to take to save Indian forging industry from this big blow of price rise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI A. SAI PRATHAP): (a) and (b) Steel sector operates in a deregulated environment and in a liberalized market prices are determined by a multitude of complex factors such as cost of raw materials, production cost, international steel price movement and the demand supply gap in the domestic market. Further, in case of value added steel items like forging grade steel the price would also depend on additional factors such as intellectual value addition, process, and cost of technology. The movement of 'forging steel' in the Whole Sale Price Index (WPI), and the Rate of Inflation based on WPI, maintained by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion from January, 2009 to January, 2010 is given in the Statement (See below). These indicate that price of forging steel in the domestic market has been stable over the past one year.

(c) In a deregulated market the role of a Government is limited to that of facilitator. Nonetheless, the Government keeps a close watch on the price movement of commodities such as steel and takes appropriate fiscal measures whenever necessary.