

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DINESH TRIVEDI): (a) Yes, Sir. During the period between 2005 and 2010, Indian Railways incurred a loss of Rs. 3288 crore on account of operation of uneconomic branch lines.

(b) and (c) Rationalisation of freight and passenger fares on Indian Railways is an ongoing exercise and is undertaken from time to time keeping in view the changes in the economic scenario.

(d) To reduce working expenses and improve earnings on the uneconomic branch lines, the following measures have been taken wherever required by the concerned Zonal Railways:

- (i) Downgradation of stations into contractor-operator halts.
- (ii) Introduction of 'One Engine Only' system.
- (iii) Introduction of tourist packages.
- (iv) Curtailment of train services including running of trains only during day time, cancellation of trains on Sundays and other holidays etc.
- (v) Issue of passenger tickets by Travelling/Booking Clerks on the trains running on the section.
- (vi) Dismantling of sidings.
- (vii) Dismantling of Signalling equipments due to "One-train only" system.
- (viii) Introduce rail car service with reduced loads.
- (ix) Increase frequencies of trains.

Efforts are also being made to persuade the State Governments concerned to agree to the closure of the Uneconomic branch Lines.

Ban on Endosulfan

*439. SHRI R.C. SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Supreme Court's ban on production, sale and use of Endosulfan would harm the interest of farmers in the coming Kharif season;

(b) if so, how the Ministry is planning to move ahead on this issue, as the farmers with small holdings would suffer a lot;

- (c) whether any alternatives have been thought of;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (e) Endosulfan is a broad spectrum insecticide approved for use in the country for several crops. Alternative pesticides to Endosulfan are available, but many are costlier. Some of them are categorized as more hazardous and also more toxic to honey bees. In writ petition (civil) No. 213 of 2011 "Democratic Youth Federation of India vs Union of India and Ors", Hon'ble Supreme Court passed an ad interim order on 13.05.2011 banning production, sale and use of Endosulfan in the country till further orders and appointed a Joint Committee headed by the Director General of Indian Council of Medical Research and the Agriculture Commissioner to conduct a scientific study on the question whether the use of Endosulfan would cause any serious health hazard to human beings and would cause environmental pollution.

The Committee was also directed by the Court to suggest alternatives to Endosulfan.

Construction of new railway line

*440. SHRI N. BALAGANGA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) the total amount allocated and sanctioned for construction of new railway lines during the last two years and this year, year-wise and zone-wise;
- (b) whether there is a huge gap between the two;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the target fixed for construction of new railway lines during the current Plan period and the achievements made so far?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DINESH TRIVEDI): (a) to (c) Allotment of funds for new line projects is made project-wise. Amount allocated and expenditure incurred for new line projects during last two years and amount allocated during current year is as under: