

(a) whether Railways are aware that Mumbai-Ahmedabad rail route is one of the busiest rail routes of the country and details of steps being taken to repair the bridges constructed over big and small rivers and canals of this route, during last three years;

(b) the details of steps taken to repair rails of this route;

(c) the steps being taken for development of Udhana Junction Station near Surat falling on this route; and

(d) whether the load on Surat Station could be reduced by limiting several trains originating from Surat up to Udhana following the development of Udhana Station?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BHARATSINH SOLANKI):

(a) Yes, Sir. During last three years period ending on 31.03.2011, following measures have been taken in respect of bridges on this route:

(i) Replacement of small span girders by Prestressed Concrete/Reinforced Concrete slabs on 52 bridges.

(ii) Rebuilding/rehabilitation/strengthening/ regirdering of 22 bridges.

(b) Track renewals, which include renewal of track components i.e. rail, sleeper etc. is a continuous activity, being taken up as and when track becomes due for renewal on GMT (Gross Million Tonnes) carried-cum-condition basis.

(c) Udhana railway station has already been developed as Model Station and is also identified for development under Adarsh Station Scheme.

(d) The existing railway infrastructure at Surat Station is adequate for the existing traffic of passenger carrying trains and there is no proposal to shift these trains to Udhana Station for the present.

Formation of Railway Stations Authority of India

1969. SHRI SANJAY RAUT:

SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA:

SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOOT:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Railways are considering to form Railway Stations Authority of India on the lines of Airports Authority of India (AAI) to develop modern railway stations across the country with advanced amenities;

(b) if so, by when; and

(c) whether Railways would also levy user charges on the lines of AAI?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BHARATSINH SOLANKI):

(a) It has been proposed to set up a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) with the participation of Ircon International Ltd., a Public Sector Undertaking under Ministry of Railways and Rail Land Development Authority (RLDA), a statutory Authority under Ministry of Railways with the primary objective of modernizing the railway stations.

(b) No time-frame for implementation has been set.

(c) No decision has yet been taken in this regard.

STD/PCO booths for disabled persons

†1970. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI:

SHRI PRABHAT JHA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Railways had allotted STD/PCO booths on Railway Stations across the country to the disabled persons;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that these disabled booth operators are seeking permission to sell other articles; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BHARATSINH SOLANKI):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 459 booths have been allotted to the physically handicapped.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Representations have been received from the STD/PCO booth holders for permission to sell other articles. The same was examined and permission was granted for sale of mobile recharge coupons on payment of certain additional license fee as per the category of the station. However, STD/PCO Booths are allotted for a specific purpose and booth holders cannot be permitted to undertake other activities. To sell additional articles, multipurpose stalls are already available at the stations. Accordingly, the permission for sale of other articles from the STD/PCO booths was not acceded to.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.