

In addition, a new scheme *viz.* Automatic Freight Rebate for traffic loaded in Inter-Zonal Traditional Empty Flow Direction has been launched from 1st October, 2014 on Southern and Northeast Frontier Railways. An incremental loading of 23843 tonnes has been registered during October and November 2014 under this new scheme.

(b) Regular meetings are held at Divisional, Zonal and Apex level with customers, trade bodies, merchant associations etc. with a view to making them aware of the benefits of the various Freight Incentive Schemes. Publicity is also being given through newspapers, railway website etc.

Operating ratio of Railways

1540. DR. T.N. SEEMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the operating ratio of Indian Railways is relatively higher in comparison to other countries;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor along with the details of operating ratio of Indian Railways during the last three years and the current year, year-wise;

(c) the steps taken/being taken by Railways to optimize their operating ratio;

(d) whether different committee reports have highlighted that Railways are lagging behind and have not kept pace with technology upgradation requirement due to inadequate investment;

(e) if so, the response of Government thereto; and

(f) the concrete steps taken by Government to develop rail transport in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) and (b) Information on Operating Ratio of railway systems in other countries is neither compiled nor maintained in this Ministry. Moreover, there are issues of diverse computation methodologies across countries, thus reducing validity of comparison of such statistical figures. The Operating Ratio of the Indian Railways for 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14 was 94.9%, 90.2% and 93.6% (Provisional) respectively. Budget Estimates 2014-15 envisage an Operating Ratio of 92.5%.

(c) Improvement in Operating Ratio necessitates a progressively higher growth rate in Traffic Earnings *vis-a-vis* the growth in Working Expenses. It is a continuous endeavour of the Railways to increase revenues and control expenditure. Steps taken to

maximize the traffic earnings, *inter-alia*, include rationalization of fare and freight tariff, effective marketing strategies to capture more and more traffic, creation of additional capacity and optimum utilization of the existing rail infrastructure, improved throughput by steps to increase productivity and efficiency, improvement of passenger interface etc. To contain expenditure, Railways have made efforts through diverse means including strict economy and austerity measures, improved man-power planning, better asset utilization and inventory management, optimizing fuel consumption etc.

(d) Yes, Sir. Technological upgradation and the funding arrangement on Indian Railways has been highlighted by different expert committees.

(e) and (f) Technological upgradation on the Railways is an on going process and has to match the topographical and socio-economic conditions of the country and specific need and requirement of Railways. Efforts to garner more resources to meet these requirements is also a continuous and progressive endeavour. Towards technology upgradation and development of rail transport in the country, Railways have already initiated the following:

- Upgradation of sleepers from wooden and metal to concrete sleepers.
- Use of fan shaped turnouts on concrete sleepers in place of wooden and metal sleepers.
- Use of heavier section (60kg) and high tensile strength (90 UTS) rails in place of 90R/52 kg 72 UTS rails.
- Predominant use of long rail panels or welded rails in place of earlier fish plated joints.
- Decision to use thick web switches on heavy density routes along with Weldable Cast Manganese Steel (CMS) crossings in place of ordinary curved switches and Cast Manganese Steel Crossings (CMS).
- Ultrasonic testing of rails and welds with the help of digital double rail testers (DRT) in place of analogue single rail tester. Vehicle borne ultrasonic testing of rails and welds.
- Mechanised maintenance of track.
- Introduction of corrosion resistant, stainless steel, higher pay to tare ratio wagons.

- Bogie Mounted Brake System for wagons.
- Higher capacity Auto car wagons etc.
- Installation of Mobile Train Radio Communication (MTRC) system for providing full duplex communication between Driver, Guard, ASM, LC Gate and approaching trains as well as maintenance staff on A, B and C routes of Indian Railways.
- Setting up of MTRC system based on GSM-R technology.
- Pace of electrification on Indian Railways has been accelerated and around 1300 RKMs are being electrified every year .
- Signalling systems like Electrical/Electronic Interlocking with centralized operation of points and signals.
- Multiple Aspect Colour Light Signalling with LED Signals.
- Complete Track Circuiting of the station.
- Digital Axle Counters.
- Automatic Signalling.
- Train Management Systems (TMS) etc.
- Considering adoption of Train Protection and Warning System (TPWS) and Train Collision Avoidance System (TCAS) as means of Automatic Train Protection subject to available funds.
- Elimination of level crossings and unmanned level crossings.
- Introduction of new generation locomotives.
- Traction development for improvement in fuel efficiency, emission and reliability.
- High speed potential LHB coaches.
- Upgradation of suburban coaches.
- Green toilets on all passenger trains.
- Enhancement of customer amenities at stations and on trains.
- Feasibility studies for semi high speed operation.

- Establishment of loco and coach manufacturing units.
- Installation of captive power generation and renewable energy projects (solar, wind etc).
- Introduction of mobile ticketing.
- Construction of dedicated freight corridors: the Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFCs) on the Eastern (Dankuni-Ludhiana, 1839 kms) and Western, (Jawaharlal Nehru Port Terminal (JNPT) - Dadri, 1499 kms) routes are being constructed. The DFC Corridors are a strategic capacity augmentation initiative taken by Railways involves construction of dedicated freight lines to carry predominantly coal and steel on the Eastern Corridor and containers on the Western Corridor .
- For financing, apart from ring-fencing priority projects and ensuring funding for last mile projects as announced in the Budget Speech 2014-15, areas such as Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Public Private Partnership (PPP) are being tapped.

Development of handloom park at Bhudan Pochampalli

1541. SHRI DEVENDER GOUD T.: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the then Minister had assured in September, 2013, at Bhongiri, Telangana, that the Ministry would provide ₹ 15 crore for development of hand-loom park at Bhundan Pochampalli;

(b) whether it is also a fact that even though it has a capacity of 2,000 looms, only 150 are currently running resulting in problems for weavers in the park; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by the Ministry to release the money and to increase the number of looms to 2,000?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) and (c) The then Hon'ble Minister of Textiles had visited the Pochampalli Handloom Park on 16th September, 2013 and requested the State Government to convey their 'in-principle' approval for bearing 50% of the cost required for strengthening of the Pochampally Handloom Park. A meeting of the Committee was held on 5th September, 2014 under the Chairmanship of Secretary