

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the reasons therefor;

(c) whether there have been protests against this move from the people of Odisha, if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether it is proposed to revert back the said move, if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Do not arise.

(c) and (d) Do not arise in view of answer given in (a) above.

Status of Tanakpur-Ghat-Bageshwar railway line

†763. SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH MAHRA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the status of laying of Tanakpur-Ghat-Bageshwar railway line, the details thereof;

(b) whether there is a possibility of laying of this railway line in future; and

(c) if not, the reasons blocking/can block the laying of this railway line?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) to (c) Survey for construction of new line from Tanakpur-Ghat-Bageshwar (155 km) in Uttarakhand has been completed. As per survey report, the cost has been assessed as ₹ 2791.00 crore with negative rate of return of 1.16%. The project could not be taken forward for execution due to un-remunerative nature, huge throwforward of ongoing projects and overall limited availability of funds.

Gauge conversion

†764. SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH MAHRA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the time when decision was taken to convert Bareilly-Pilibhit-Khatima-Tanakpur railway line into broad gauge;

(b) whether the conversion of above line into broad gauge has been completed;

(c) if not, the details of efforts made so far to clear the obstacles; and

(d) the time by when this work would be completed?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA) (a) to (d) Gauge conversion of Bareilly-Pilibhit-Khatima-Tanakpur has been sanctioned in two parts. Gauge conversion of Bareilly-Bhojipura was sanctioned in the year 2000-01 and the same has already been completed and commissioned during 2012-13.

Further, gauge conversion of Bhojipura-Pilibhit-Khatima-Tanakpur was sanctioned in the year 2007-08. On this section, earthwork, blanketing, bridges work, signalling work, electrical work, etc. have been taken up. In addition to scarcity of funds, forestry clearance has been a reason for delay in completion of this project. Meetings have been held at various levels for expediting the forestry clearance. Target date for completion of the project has not been fixed, due to huge throwforward of ongoing projects and limited overall availability of funds and also due to uncertainty of forestry clearance.

Manual scavenging in Railways

765. SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the details regarding workers employed by Railways to clean excrement from the railway tracks, whether on contract or regular basis;

(b) whether Railways have a detailed plan with specific time-frames and targets to eliminate the manual scavenging practice;

(c) if not, whether it propose to make such plan; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA) : (a) The number of employees working on Indian Railways as on 31.03.2013 in the category of Safaiwalas is 29,295.

(b) to (d) There is no manual scavenging on Indian Railways. In order to have effective cleaning of platforms lines, concrete washable aprons with high pressure jet cleaning arrangement is being provided. Guidelines for cleaning with protective gear for ensuring sanitation at stations have been notified.

Indian Railways have developed environment friendly bio-toilets to eliminate direct discharge of human wastes from passenger coaches. It is targeted to eliminate direct discharge toilet system from the entire fleet of passenger coaches by 2021-22.

Railways have planned to progressively provide washable aprons on such platform lines where train stops for longer duration during the morning hours subject to availability of funds. 785 platform lines have already been provided with washable aprons with water jet system.