

Outlived railway bridges

1408.SHRI RAM KUMAR KASHYAP: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) the total number of railway bridges in the country and how many of them are more than a century old and have outlived their life; and
- (b) the measures taken to maintain railway bridges regularly and to construct new bridges in place of outlived bridges?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) and (b) There are a total of 1,38,912 bridges on Indian Railways out of which 35,437 bridges are more than 100 years old. However, the age of the bridge does not have any direct relevance on the physical condition of the bridge. There is a well established system of inspection of bridges on Indian Railways. All the bridges are inspected twice a year, one before the onset of monsoon and one detailed inspection after the monsoon. In addition, the detailed technical inspection of certain bridges is also carried out at specified periodicity by the designated officials. Repair / strengthening / rehabilitation / rebuilding of bridges is a continuous process and is undertaken whenever so warranted by their physical condition as ascertained during these inspections and not on the basis of age. If the corrective / remedial measures are expected to take a long duration due to the complexity of the site situation, etc., suitable safety measures like imposing speed restrictions and keeping such bridge under close watch are taken till the bridge is repaired / strengthened / rehabilitated / rebuilt. During the last five years, 4338 bridges have been repaired/strengthened/ rehabilitated/rebuilt on Indian Railways.

Increasing railway network

1409.SHRI RAM KUMAR KASHYAP: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the present railway network is overburdened and inadequate to meet the new challenges of a fast developing economy;
- (b) if so, the measures taken by Railways for the purpose;
- (c) whether some regions are beyond the reach of Railways due to unfavourable geographical conditions and if so, the steps taken to open these areas for removing regional inequalities in economic growth; and
- (d) whether Railways are facing stiff competition from road transport and thus its