

(b) and (c) Safety is accorded the highest priority by Indian Railways and all possible steps are undertaken on a continual basis to prevent accidents and to enhance safety. These include timely replacement of over-aged assets, adoption of suitable technologies for upgradation and maintenance of track, rolling stock, signalling and interlocking systems, safety drives, greater emphasis on training of officials and inspections at regular intervals to monitor and educate staff for observance of safe practices. Safety devices/systems being used to prevent accidents include complete track circuiting, provision of Block Proving Axle Counters (BPAC), Auxiliary Warning System (AWS), Colour Light LED Signals, Vigilance Control Device (VCD), usage of 60kg rails and Pre-stressed Concrete Sleepers, long rail panels, better welding technology, progressive use of Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) Coaches, Centre Buffer Couplers with Integral Coach Factory (ICF) Coaches, etc. Resources required for improving Safety will be provided as and when required.

#### **Indo-Bangla railway track**

2386. SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) the status of Indo-Bangla railway, track;
- (b) by when it is likely to be opened for train passengers between both the countries;
- (c) whether such a project is also under consideration with our other adjoining neighbours; and
- (d) if so, the status thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) and (b) Agartala to Akhaura (15 Km) project has been sanctioned for providing additional rail connectivity between India and Bangladesh with funding of Indian portion of project (5 Km) by Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) and of the Bangladesh portion (10 Km) by Ministry of External Affairs. The present cost of this project is ₹ 967.85 crores with cost of Bangladesh portion as ₹ 387.85 crores and Indian portion as ₹ 580.00 crores. As per the MoU signed between Government of India and Government of Bangladesh, Indian Railways is responsible for the construction of the Indian portion and Bangladesh Railway is responsible for the construction of the Bangladesh portion of the project. Execution of Indian portion of the project has been entrusted to IRCON. This line will cater to passengers as well

as goods traffic. No time frame for opening can be given as DoNER has expressed its inability to fund the project and present throwforward of ongoing projects and limited availability of funds for new lines precludes Railways to proceed with the execution of the project.

(c) and (d) Two projects for Indo-Nepal connectivity have been taken up. The status of these two projects is as detailed below:

(i) Jogbani-Biratnagar (Nepal)(18.60 Km) new line project:- This project taken up at an anticipated cost of ₹407 crore is being funded by Ministry of External Affairs. 5.45 Km length falls in India and 13.60 km falls in Nepal. Land for the entire project, except for a length of about 1.8 Km falling in Nepal, has been acquired and earthwork, bridge works etc. taken up.

(ii) Jaynagar-Bijalpura gauge conversion and its extension up to Bardibas (69 Km):- This project taken up at an anticipated cost of ₹ 540 crore is being funded by Ministry of External Affairs. 3 Km length falls in India and 66 km. falls in Nepal. Final location Survey has been completed. Land plans for Indian portion has been submitted to the State Government. In Nepal portion, land has been handed over in 47 km. in patches. Earthwork and bridgework have been taken up in the stretches where land is available.

### **Reduction in consumption of electricity**

2387. SHRI PAUL MANOJ PANDIAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Railways were able to reduce the consumption of electricity by around ₹400 crore a year through greater efficiency, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether it is also a fact that Railways will be able to reduce the cost of over 2,000 MW power that it will purchase by June, 2017, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) Bureau of Energy Efficiency has assessed that Indian Railways (IR) have been achieving an average annual reduction in electricity consumption of about 2% in electric traction and about 2.8% per year in non traction applications. On the total electricity bill of about ₹12,332 crore for the year 2014-15 (provisional) it translates into a saving of about ₹ 250 crore per annum due to adopting greater energy efficiency measures.

(b) IR has initiated steps to procure power through the bidding process at the tariff to be discovered through market process and to source power from captive power