

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): Rajdhani trains connect Delhi with the North-East, besides other fast trains that connect North-East with other parts of the country. Due to high cost of the high speed rail projects, at this stage, only Mumbai-Ahmedabad high speed rail project has been approved for implementation.

**Train to connect Patiala and Chandigarh**

1730. SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has received requests from public for starting a train to connect Patiala and Chandigarh;

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

(c) the time-line to connect Patiala and Chandigarh *via* train?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) Requests/representations for introduction of new trains including trains from Patiala to Chandigarh are received at various levels of Railways administration *viz.* Stations, Divisional level, Zonal level and Railway Board's level, a compendium of which is not maintained.

(b) and (c) At present, 14887/14888 Barmer-Kalka Express (daily) is providing a direct connection between Patiala and Chandigarh. Ambala and Patiala are connected by 10 pairs of train services including 9 pairs daily services. Passengers of Patiala desirous of travelling to Chandigarh may avail change over facility at Ambala which is adequately connected by train services to Chandigarh. Introduction of new train from Patiala to Chandigarh is not feasible, at present, due to operational and resource constraints. However, introduction of train is an ongoing process over Indian Railways and is done keeping in view the traffic demand, operational feasibility, availability of resources etc.

**Fast track implementation of projects scheme**

1731. DR. CHANDAN MITRA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways have prioritized certain projects under its Fast track implementation of projects scheme;

(b) if so, the details thereof, Zone-wise; and

(c) the fresh steps taken by Government to reduce the gap between project conceptualization and commissioning in order to decongest choked networks and to enhance speed and punctuality of trains?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) and (b) Prioritization of projects is a continuous exercise carried out on the basis of traffic and safety considerations and availability of funds. In addition to ongoing projects, 77 doubling/tripling/quadrupling projects having an aggregate length of 9,040 Km. and total estimated cost of ₹ 90,304 crore were included in the Railway Budget for 2015-16 to decongest existing saturated section and create additional carrying capacity.

Zone-wise break up of fast track implementation of projects is as under:— Central Railway 6, East Coast Railway 8, East Central Railway 11, Eastern Railway 1, North Central Railway 4, North East Railway 4, Northeast Frontier Railway 2, Northern Railway 4, North Western Railway 2, South Central Railway 8, South East Central Railway 5, South Eastern Railway 5, Southern Railway 4, South Western Railway 3, West Central Railway 6 and Western Railway 4.

(c) Steps taken to reduce gap between project conceptualization and commissioning include review of procedures for Detailed Project Report (DPR)/detailed estimate examination/sanction, delegation of powers, adequate funding for prioritized projects and regular monitoring of progress.

#### **Railway development fund**

1732. DR. K.P. RAMALINGAM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the World Bank and Railways have decided to work together to create a Railway Development Fund, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether the proposed fund will partly finance the US \$ 142 billion investment plan for the core infrastructure sector announced by Government, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) and (b) The World Bank has been approached to explore the possibility of setting up of a Railway infrastructure development fund. The World Bank has taken up a detailed scoping and options study for creating such a fund.