

Steps to reduce the burden of pending cases on courts

650. SHRI PARIMAL NATHWANI: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the steps Government proposes to take to unburden the High Courts and the Supreme Court from huge load of pending cases;

(b) whether Government mulls increasing the age of superannuation for High Court Judges from the present 62 to 65 years and for the Supreme Court Judges from 65 to 67 years, if so, the details thereof, if not the reasons therefor; and

(c) the other steps Government proposes to take for quick disposal of pending cases in higher courts and even in lower courts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI P. P. CHAUDHARY): (a) to (c) The strength of the Judges of the Supreme Court was increased from 25 to 30 (excluding the Chief Justice of India) in the year 2009 to address the increasing workload of cases in the Supreme Court. The sanctioned strength of High Court Judges has increased from 906 judges in June 2014 to 1079 judges in June 2016. There is no proposal at present for increasing the age of superannuation for the Judges of Supreme Court and High Courts. Government has adopted a co-ordinated approach to assist judiciary for phased liquidation of arrears and pendency in judicial systems, which, *inter-alia*, involves better infrastructure for courts including computerisation, increase in strength of judges of High Courts, policy and legislative measures in the areas prone to excessive litigation and emphasis on human resource development.

Pending Railway project in Bihar

†651. SHRI RAM NATH THAKUR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has planned to convert the railway line from Kosi railway bridge to Saraigarh *via* Sakri to Nirmali into broad gauge but the work is still incomplete after so many years;

(b) whether there is no operation of trains from Ghoghardiha station to Nirmali station of Samastipur division for several years, the reasons therefor;

(c) the length of bridge in metres proposed to be constructed over Bhutahi Balan river, flowing in the east of Kisnipatti Kosi embankment situated in the east of Ghoghardiha station, details thereof; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) time-limit to start broad gauge line?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) Yes, Sir. The Sakri-Laukaha Bazar-Nirmali and Saharsa-Forbesganj (206 km) Gauge Conversion Project was included in the year 2003-04 at an anticipated cost of ₹ 356 crore. Earlier this project was to be funded by Ministry of Defence and accordingly the project had been progressing as per the funds released by them. In the meantime, Ministry of Defence did not fund this project. Therefore, to fast track this project, Ministry of Railways have decided to fund it through its own sources. Construction of Kosi Bridge is already completed. However, Railway traffic from Sakri to Saraigarh through Kosi Bridge can be commissioned only after completion of Sakri-Nirmali and Saraigarh to Forbesganj Gauge Conversion Project.

(b) Operation of trains between Nirmali and Ghoghradiha has been stopped since April 2016 to raise the level of Nirmali yard by 5.00 meter to raise the rail level so as to meet the rail level of Kosi Bridge.

(c) A Railway bridge measuring 10 X 30.48 meter span over river Bhutahi Balan is planned to be constructed.

(d) No time-frame has been fixed for commissioning of this Broad Gauge Project.

Track capacity for operation of express trains

†652. DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the target fixed for coming three years in respect of track capacity of Railways for operation of express trains in the country and the status of section-wise annual programme and implementation according to it; and

(b) in the above context, the annual programme of coming three years in respect of supply of new coaches according to the express railway passenger trains?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) and (b) For Commissioning of Railway Projects, targets are fixed on annual basis. For 2016-17, target of 400 Km New Line, 800 Km Gauge Conversion and 1600 Km of Doubling have been targeted. Targets for next year shall be fixed at the time of preparation of Budget for 2017-18.

Annual Production Programme of production of coaches for the years 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 is for 4627, 4312 and 4358 coaches respectively.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.