

Change in promotion criteria

2062. SHRI NEERAJ SHEKHAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government, *vide* Railway Board order No. E(GP)2016/1/9 dated 11 August, 2016, has changed the priorities of promotion to senior scale (ad hoc-promotion) between Group B and Group A officers, setting aside the earlier orders of Railway Board dated 17 April, 1990, if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor;

(b) whether Government has received representation from MPs regarding restoration of the earlier order and scrapping of orders dated 11 August, 2016, if so, the details thereof, representation-wise;

(c) the details of action taken by Government thereon, representation-wise; and

(d) by when the new orders would be scrapped?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) Yes, Sir. As per classification of posts, Senior Scale posts are classified as Group 'A' posts, to be occupied by promotion of eligible Group 'A'/Junior Scale officers. However, vacancies arising in Senior Scale are now permitted to be filled up on ad-hoc basis by Group 'B' officers who have at least 3 years of service in Group 'B', if Group 'A'/Junior Scale officers with 3 years of service are not available.

(b) Yes, Sir. They have requested for restoration of Railway Board's earlier policy of 17th April, 1990, which permitted promoting Group 'B' officers on ad-hoc basis to Senior Scale in preference to Group 'A'/Junior Scale officers with 3 years of service.

(c) and (d) The representations have been submitted to the Hon'ble Minister of State for Railways for replying in terms of the extant policy guidelines.

Construction of Ambikapur-Barwadih railway line

†2063. SHRI RAM VICHAR NETAM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the occasions when the provisions were made in the budget for sanctioning the railway line for connecting Chirimiri-Ambikapur-Barwadih railway line to Jharkhand passing through Chhattisgarh considering the long pending demand of the people and peoples' representatives of Chhattisgarh; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether it is a fact that during British times, the said railway line was sanctioned and construction of the station, bridges and soil work was initiated, the remains of which are present even today?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) and (b) Barwadih-Chirimiri (Ambikapur) (182 km.) new line project was included in Railway Budget 2013-14 at a cost of ₹ 1137 crore subject to requisite approval. Niti Aayog had given 'In principle' approval to the project subject to the condition that Railways get land free from concerned State Governments and approach Coal India Limited with a request to develop this project as a joint venture. The project could not be taken forward as neither State Governments of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh nor Coal India Limited have responded to either share the cost of the project or take the project as a Joint Venture.

Maintenance of railway tracks

2064. SHRI ANIL DESAI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways have state of the art technology for maintenance of railway tracks;

(b) whether quality control for track maintenance in railways is poor;

(c) whether in the absence of robust tracks, going in for high-speed trains is not of much help; and

(d) if so, the speedy steps Railways are taking to have State of the art technology for maintenance of tracks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) The systematic maintenance of Railway track is being done with the help of track machines, and the intermediate attention and other patrolling activities are normally done by Track Maintainers as per guidelines contained in Indian Railway Permanent Way Manual (IRPWM). The track machines deployed on Indian Railways are having state of the art technology.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Indian Railways has adopted robust track structure consisting of Pre-stressed Concrete (PSC) Sleepers, higher Ultimate Tensile Strength (UTS) rails, fan-shaped layout on Pre-stressed Concrete (PSC) Sleepers and Steel Channel Sleepers on girder bridges. Further, improvement in track structure by use of 60kg rails, Thick Web Switches etc. is progressively adopted during primary track renewals.