

Broadly, trains lose punctuality on Indian Railways due to factors related to its internal working as well as external factors of which the Railways are not in control of. Other than asset failures, various constraints/difficulties which adversely affect punctuality are numerous, such as line capacity constraints on account of increasing passenger and freight traffic, adverse weather conditions (fog, rains, breaches), accidents, intermittent natural calamities such as floods, cyclones, heavy rains, heavy road traffic at level crossing gates, multi faceted law and order problems, including public agitations and bandh calls in left wing extremism affected areas of Bihar and other States, miscreant activities such as theft of Railway assets, mid-section run over cases involving cattle and humans, etc.

Eliminating railway level crossings on National Highways

428. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Railways have signed an MoU with the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways to eliminate railway level crossings on National Highways;
- (b) if so, the number of railway level crossings eliminated by construction of ROBs/RUBs during the last two years of signing of the MoU;
- (c) the reasons for very slow pace of implementation of the MoU; and
- (d) the fresh steps taken by Government to expedite the process of eliminating railway level crossings on National Highways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) As per Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Ministry of Railways and Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MORTH) on 10.11.2014, MORTH/National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) will replace all level crossings on National Highway (NH) Corridors by Road Over Bridges (ROBs)/Road Under Bridges (RUBs) in next five years at their own cost subject to availability of funds.

In the year 2015-16, 10 number of ROBs and in the year 2016-17, 9 number of ROBs across level crossings on NH have been constructed by NHAI at its own cost. Out of these 19 locations, 8 number of level crossing have been closed.

As far as progress of construction of ROBs under this scheme is concerned, Railways is responsible only for approval of the General Arrangement Drawings (GADs) as far as possible in the 60 days of final submission by MORTH/NHAI officials. The construction of ROB on single entity basis is undertaken by MORTH/NHAI.

Ministry of Railways (MoR) has developed and launched web-based application for speedy approval of GADs of ROBs/RUBs.

As on 16.11.2016, out of total 319 GADs, 166 GADs approved by Railways and 126 GADs are under examination with MORTH/NHAI and balance 27 GADs are under examination with Railways.

Overcrowded Mumbai suburban trains

429. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that more than eighty lakh people travel daily in Mumbai suburban trains—the lifeline of the city and many of the trains are running overcrowded, if so, the details thereof and Government's response thereto;

(b) whether Government is considering any proposal with the Government of Maharashtra for constructing an elevated corridor to decongest the traffic; and

(c) if so, the details thereof indicating the details of plans chalked out by Railways to sort out the problems of local train passengers during the next three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) Around 74 lakh passengers travelled daily in Mumbai suburban section during the Financial Year 2015-16.

Mumbai Suburban consists of two Zonal Railways *i.e.* Central Railway and Western Railway. To reduce overcrowding in suburban trains, Central Railway has increased the number of suburban services to 1660 in the year 2015-16 *i.e.* a growth of 2.6% over the corresponding previous year. 590 services on harbor line have been converted from 9 Car rakes to 12 Car rakes. The number of suburban services in the crucial and highly patronized section between Thane and Kalyan has been increased to 11 trains per hour. In Western Railway, suburban trains have been augmented from 12285 coaches in the year 2010-11 to 14484 in the year 2015-16, reflecting an increase of about 18%. However, augmentation of suburban trains is an ongoing process subject to operational feasibility, availability of resources, etc.

(b) and (c) The proposal for fast elevated corridor between CSTM-Panvel (49 km) with a spur line to Navi Mumbai International Airport (6.6 km) from Seawood/Nerul at an estimated cost of ₹ 12,131 crore, to be shared between Ministry of Railways and Government of Maharashtra has been received in the Ministry. Completion of this project will reduce travel time, provide better travel experience to passengers due to air-conditioned services, facilitate de-congestion on the Harbour Line and enable eastward expansion of Greater Mumbai. Ministry of Railways is awaiting approval from the State Government for implementation of Bandra-Virar (48 kms) elevated suburban rail corridor through PPP.