

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) to (c) Railway-owned vacant plots of lands at various locations in Mumbai *i.e.* at Thane, Elphinstone, Matunga Road, Mahim, Bandra, Khar, Santacruz-Vile Parle, Goregaon, Malad-Kandivali-Borivali-Dahisar, Nallasopara and Virar are occupied illegally by various slum dwellers. About 1460 cases are pending in various Courts *i.e.* Supreme Court, High Court, Civil Court, Collector Court and Estate Court pertaining to freeing these plots of lands from illegal occupants.

Railways carry out regular surveys to find out new encroachments by way of illegal occupation of Railway land. As and when new encroachments by way of illegal occupation of railway land are noticed, immediate action is taken to remove such encroachments with the assistance of Railway Protection Force and Local Civil Authorities. Railways also take measures like licensing of land to Railway employees for Grow More Food (GMF) scheme, provision of boundary wall, fencing and tree plantation at vulnerable locations, to prevent further illegal occupation of its land by slum dwellers.

Women Self-Help Groups in Railway Catering Service

4134. DR. VINAY P. SAHASRABUDDHE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railway Board has drawn up plans for involving women self-help groups in railway catering services, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether women self-help groups have already started providing catering service on some routes, if so, how does the Ministry assesses their performance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are empanelled by Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC) for providing local cuisines in running trains through station based e-catering service. At present, 9 SHGs have been empanelled on 10 stations which provide authentic regional food cooked in hygienic conditions. Passengers of all trains originating/stopping at these stations can avail of the facility of SHGs cooked food through e-catering. Further proliferation of the scheme, being a continuous process, has been mandated through IRCTC.

Rail track from Jammu to Kashmir valley regions

4135. SHRI NAZIR AHMED LAWAY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has fixed any time-period for completing the work on railway track from Jammu to Kashmir valley regions;

(b) by when Government is expecting to start trains from Srinagar to rest of the country; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to expedite the process of completing the railway track from Jammu to Srinagar?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) and (b) The total length of Jammu-Udhampur-Baramulla Rail link project is 326 km. Out of this, Baramulla to Banihal (79 km) and from Jammu to Katra (136 km) have been completed and commissioned. The works in balance length of 111 km from Katra to Banihal are in full swing. This section predominantly involves construction of 27 nos. of tunnels having total length of 97 km and 27 major bridges with total length of 7 km. Apart from difficult terrain, the completion of Railway projects depends on a number of factors such as land acquisition, forestry and wildlife clearances, shifting of various services, weather conditions, law and order, and availability of adequate funds. Since many of these factors are beyond the control of the Ministry of Railways, it is not feasible to give time lines for completion of the project and running of trains.

(c) All the tenders for major works have been awarded and construction work is in full swing. An amount of ₹ 1650 crore has been spent on this project in 2016-17.

Survey of rail route to Amaravati

4136. SHRI T.G. VENKATESH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd. (RVNL) has made the survey of rail route to Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh, and submitted its report, if so, the details thereof;

(b) the estimated cost of the project; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government to expedite the sanction and execution process of this project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. A Reconnaissance Engineering Cum Traffic Survey (RETS) for new line between Vijayawada and Guntur via Amravati (106.30 km) was included in the Budget for the year 2016-17. The survey has since been completed by Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd.(RVNL). This project has now been included in Budget 2017-18 with an anticipated cost of ₹ 2679.59 crore subject to obtaining requisite approval.