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6	Padrauna-Kushinagar-Gorakhpur (Sardar Nagar) 64 km	2017-18	Project has been included in the Budget subject to requisite approval.
7	Etah-Kasganj 29 km	2017-18	Project has been included in the Budget subject to requisite approval.

Completion of Railway project requires number of clearances from various Ministries and Departments of State/Central Governments. These, *inter alia*, include clearances inherent to land acquisition, statutory clearance and shifting of utilities etc, which are part of project execution. As many factors responsible for completion of a project are beyond the control of Ministry of Railways, it is not feasible to fix time frame for completion of all projects.

#### **Empowering railway protection force**

†729. SHRI LAL SINH VADODIA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is seriously contemplating to further empower Railway Protection Force;

(b) if so, whether Government has taken any steps in this direction; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) to (c) A proposal has been initiated for amendment in the Railways Act, 1989 which *inter alia* envisages empowerment of the Railway Protection Force to deal with cases of theft of passengers' belongings and to initiate legal action against accused persons apprehended for outraging modesty of women passengers. After completion of inter-Ministerial consultations, proposal has been forwarded to the Cabinet Secretariat for approval.

#### **Vacancies in maintenance and inspection wings of railways**

730. DR. K.V. P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are more than 60 per cent vacancies in the Maintenance and Inspection Wings of Railways;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.