

Concerns about bullet train project

742. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Japan wants more bullet train routes across India, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether it is also a fact that SAIL has been discarded for supplying the rail for the bullet train project, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether the Japanese are concerned about the different work culture between the two countries, if so, the details thereof and the planning of Government to solve it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) No formal proposal from Government of Japan for High Speed Corridor except for the ongoing Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR) project is received in this Ministry.

(b) The rail needed for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR) project is not being produced in India.

(c) No, Sir.

Running allowance to loco staffs and guards

743. SHRI ELAMARAM KAREEM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the running allowance given to loco staffs and guards before and after Seventh Pay Commission;

(b) the reasons why Railways is not increasing the running allowance of loco running staffs and guards even after repeated protests and representations by the employees;

(c) whether Government is aware that the running staff retirees of Railways are denied parity in pension; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and whether Government would take action to implement pension parity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) At present Loco Staff and Guards are being allowed Running Allowance at the rates fixed prior to notification of Seventh Central Pay Commission. After implementation of Seventh Central Pay Commission, revision of Running Allowance is under process.

(b) Kilometrage Allowance and other related allowances of the Running Staff is to be decided through bilateral discussions with the Federations and further with the concurrence of the Ministry of Finance. Accordingly, a proposal was approved by the Competent Authority and has been sent to Ministry of Finance for concurrence.

(c) and (d) The pension of Running Staff retirees has been revised as per the instructions of Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare (DOP&PW), the nodal Department on pensionary matters. Ministry of Railways, being an administrative Ministry, follows the instructions issued by the nodal Department, *i.e.* DOP&PW on all the issues of pension.

Reduction in dynamic fares in Suvidha trains

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

(a) whether Government is aware that the dynamic fares introduced in the Suvidha trains are very high and so passengers are unable to bear such exorbitant rates;

(b) whether Government has received any representation and proposals to reduce the dynamic fares, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken by Railways to reduce the fares?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) Suvidha specials are introduced during peak demand period on variable fare structures for reserved class. The fare structures of Suvidha trains are as under:—

- (i) Unreserved second class: Normal superfast Mail/Express fares.
- (ii) Reserved Class: Minimum fare is Tatkal fare for initial 20% of the berths and thereafter the fare increases for subsequent slabs of 20% of seats/berths booked subject to maximum three times of the Tatkal fare.

However, alternative trains on normal fare structures are already running on most of the routes of Suvidha trains.

(b) and (c) Representations/suggestions on review of certain policies are received regularly at various levels like Ministry of Railways, Zonal Railways, Division, Station level, online etc. The representations/suggestions are examined and action as found feasible and justified is taken. At present, there is no proposal to reduce the fare structure of Suvidha trains.

However, refund provisions of Suvidha trains have been rationalised and normal refund rules have been made applicable for Suvidha trains also.