

(c) whether total capacity for passengers on Rajdhani Express and other superfast trains on Delhi-Mumbai route is inadequate; and

(d) if so, the steps that are being taken to introduce more superfast trains like Rajdhani Express/Tejas Express on the route?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL): (a) to (d) At present, Tejas Expresses provide day-time intercity services as these trains have seating accommodation only. The distance between Mumbai and Delhi is 1384 km and the transit time is over 15 hours. Therefore, Tejas services are not appropriate for this sector, at present. However, to cater to the needs of Delhi- Mumbai sector, Indian Railways have introduced 22221/22222 Hazrat Nizamuddin Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj (T) Rajdhani Express as a bi-weekly service with effect from 19-01-2019. This was in addition to the existing two pairs of Rajdhani Services namely 12951/12952 Mumbai Central - New Delhi Rajdhani Express and 12953/12954 Mumbai Central - Hazrat Nizamuddin August Kranti Rajdhani Express. Keeping in view the overall occupancy of the trains running on the Delhi - Mumbai sector, which is more than 100%, the frequency of the 22221/22222 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj (T) Rajdhani Express service has been increased from bi-weekly to 4 days a week *w.e.f.* 14-09-2019. Besides, introduction of trains is an on-going process on Indian Railways.

Lack of rail connectivity in Odisha

2986. SHRI BHASKAR RAO NEKKANTI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that a large area in Odisha is still deprived of rail connectivity and that the people and their representatives are demanding rail connectivity in their respective areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof, project-wise; and

(c) the time by when the work on these projects are likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL): (a) and (b) Sanction of projects for development of Railways is a continuous process. Railway projects are sanctioned, based on demands raised by State Governments, Central Ministries, Members of Parliament, other public representatives and Railways' own requirement, participation by State Government or private entities etc. They are taken up on the basis of remunerativeness, last mile connectivity, missing links and alternate routes etc.

To further improve the rail connectivity in the State of Odisha, presently 36 Projects costing ₹49,984 crore for 4,567 km length, falling fully/partly in the State of Odisha are under different stages of planning/approval/execution. This includes:-

10 New Line Projects are covering a length of 1,269 km at a cost of ₹16,598 crore. Out of which, 80 km length has been commissioned and an expenditure of ₹4,260 crore has been incurred upto March 2019.

1 Gauge Conversion (GC) project is covering a length of 140 km at a cost of ₹1349 crore. Out of which, 90 km length has been commissioned and an expenditure of ₹191 crore has been incurred upto March 2019.

25 Doubling Projects are covering a length of 3,159 km at a cost of ₹32,037 crore. Out of which, 494 km length has been commissioned and an expenditure of ₹8.246 crore has been incurred upto March 2019.

Average annual Budget allocation for infrastructure projects and safety works, falling fully/partly in the state of Odisha during 2014-19 has been enhanced to ₹4,126 crore per year from ₹838 crore per year during 2009-14, which is 492% of average annual budget allocation during 2009-14.

Total allocation of Budget for infrastructure projects and safety works, falling fully/partly in State of Odisha in 2019-20 is ₹4.568 crore, which is 545% of average annual allocation during 2009-14.

During 2009-14, 267 km (56 km of New line, 83 km of Gauge conversion and 128 km of Doubling projects), falling fully/partly in the state of Odisha, have been commissioned at an average rate of 53 km per year. During 2014-19, 588 km (136 km of New line and 452 km of Doubling projects), falling fully/partly in the State of Odisha, have been commissioned at an average rate of 118 km per year which is 220% of commissioning achieved during 2009-14.

Many of these projects are getting delayed due to land acquisition, forestry and wild life clearance, shifting of utilities etc. Under such circumstances, Ministry of Railways has requested Government of Odisha to take appropriate action for clearing the bottlenecks, so that the pace of execution of Railway Projects is expedited.

State Government of Odisha has to deposit their due share of ₹144 crore for cost sharing Projects in Odisha.

(c) The completion of any Railway project depends on various factors like quick land acquisition by State Government, forest clearance by officials of forest department, shifting of infringing utilities (both underground and over ground), statutory clearances from various authorities, geological and topographical conditions of area, law and order situation in the area of project site, number of working months in a year for particular project site due to climatic conditions, cooperation and zeal of State Government for early completion of project, encountering unforeseen conditions like earthquake, flooding, excessive rains, strikes of labour, orders of Hon'ble Courts, situation and conditions of working agencies/contractors etc. All these factors affect the completion time of the project, which is finely worked out at the completion stage. Therefore, confirmed timeline for completion of the project cannot be given at this stage.

Sabari rail project

2987. SHRI K. J. ALPHONS: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the status of Sabari railway project to cater to the need of pilgrims going to Sabarimala; and

(b) the total estimate for the project and the amount provided in the current year's budget?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL): (a) and (b) Angamali-Sabarimala new rail line (116 Km) was sanctioned in 1997-98 at a cost of ₹550 crore. The 5 km section of this project was passing through Periyar Tiger Reserve Forest. On the request of State Government of Kerala, the project was terminated at Erumeli due to reserve forest area.

Alignment of the project passes through three Districts *i.e.* Ernakulam, Idukki and Kottayam districts. Final location survey (FLS) for Angamali-Kaladi-Ramapuram section (70 Km) has been completed in 2002 and further survey in the Kottayam district was stopped by local people in 2007 due to objections on alignment.

To resolve the issue, State Government proposed a revised alignment from Ramapuram to Erumeli (41 km). Revised alignment has been approved.

For this project, Government of Kerala had consented for sharing 50% of above project cost in November, 2015. However, the State Government had requested in November, 2016 to execute this project with Railway funds.