

Slum settlements along railway tracks

1553. SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways is aware that slum settlements situated along railway tracks in the country are posing danger to the railway commuters as well as to properties;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) whether a special task force was constituted to remove encroachments near railway tracks in the past; and

(d) if so, the role played by the special task force and the time by which such encroachments on railway tracks are likely to be removed?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Slums near the track cause bottlenecks in train operation and track maintenance and thus affect the safety of trains, passengers and Railway properties. The slums near the track are also a safety hazard to the slum dwellers.

(c) and (d) No Special task force was constituted for removal of encroachments. However, Railways is actively involved in removal of encroachment from Railway land for which it carries out regular surveys of encroachment and takes action for their removal. If the encroachments are of temporary nature (soft encroachments) in the shape of jhuggies, jhopris and squatters, the same are removed in consultation with and assistance of Railway Protection Force and local civil authorities. For other encroachments, action is taken under Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorized Occupants) Act, 1971 (PPE Act, 1971), as amended from time to time. Actual eviction of unauthorized occupants is carried out with the assistance of State Government and police.

Removal of encroachment is a continuous process. Due to consistent efforts of Railways, during the past three years (2017 to 2019), a total of 47.15 Hectare of Railways land has been retrieved from encroachment.