

Safety and expansion in Railways

3456. DR.T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Railways have decided to focus on safety, augmentation of resources and expansion, to run as a profitable enterprise and deliver results;
- (b) if so, whether, in addition to this expansion, punctuality and improving the quality of services would also be focussed during the current financial year;
- (c) whether any concrete measures in this regard have been worked out; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) Many measures are taken to focus on safety, augmentation of resources, network expansion, as also improve punctuality and quality of services. Some of the important steps are given below:—

- (i) A non-lapsable Special Railway Safety Fund of Rs. 17,000 crores has been set up for renewal and replacement of over-aged assets and for safety enhancement works.
- (ii) Signalling safety devices such as track circuiting, block proving axle counters, provision of solid state panel interlocking, Auxiliary Warning System, interlocking of level crossing gates, data loggers, second distant signals etc. are provided to the aid of human element in train operation. Two pilot projects *viz* ETCS (European Train Control System) and Anti-Collision Device (ACD) have been sanctioned for trials for prevention of collisions.
- (iii) For monitoring track geometry and running characteristics of the track, sophisticated track recording cars, oscillograph cars and portable accclerometers are used progressively. To detect rail fractures/weld failures, adequate double rail ultrasonic flaw detectors are procured. Self propelled Ultrasonic Rail Testing Cars are also being procured.
- (iv) All diesel/electric locomotive sheds and major Routine Over Hauling (ROH) Depots have been equipped with ultrasonic testing equipment for timely detection of flaws in the axles.

- (v) Training facilities for drivers, guards and staff connected with train operation are modernized and simulators are resorted to for training of drivers.
- (vi) To capture additional freight and parcel traffic, marketing efforts have been identified apart from drives for realisation of outstanding dues and against ticket-less travellers.
- (vii) Action has been initiated to mobilise resources through exploitation of railway land and air space, leasing of advertising rights at railway stations and on the rolling stock etc.
- (viii) Efforts are being made to exercise tight control over operating expenditure and to follow austerity and economy measures in many areas.
- (ix) Productive use of manpower, better utilisation of assets, improvement in inventory management and maximum realization from sale of scrap.
- (x) By rationalizing the passenger fare in the current year's budget the resource base of the Railways is expected to be augmented by Rs.910 crores.
- (xi) In order to contain the staff costs, Railways have been progressively reducing the staff strength. During the 10th Plan it is proposed to achieve 2 per cent reduction in staff strength every year.
- (xii) In order to save on the cost of electricity purchased for traction purposes, Railways have started drawing power directly from NTPC at some locations and are also exploring the possibility of setting up captive power houses for generating electricity.
- (xiii) Projects are also being undertaken with Public-Private participation and with State Government participation.
- (xiv) A recent initiative to strengthen the Golden Quadrilateral and its diagonals has been taken to cater to the anticipated growth in Rail traffic.
- (xv) Intensive and round the clock monitoring of passenger carrying trains at all the three levels viz. Divisional, Zonal Head Quarters and Railway Board.
- (xvi) Improvement in standard of maintenance to reduce equipment failures affecting quality of service.
- (xvii) National Train Enquiry System (NTES) project has been implemented to upgrade passenger information and enquiries.

- (xviii) 288 stations have been selected as model stations to provide upgraded passenger amenities at stations, which include Automatic Vending Machines, Self Printing Ticket Machines, Pay and Use Toilets, improved Waiting Rooms/Retiring Rooms etc.

Golden Quadrilateral rail network

3457. DR.T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Railways are considering to develop a Golden Quadrilateral rail network, similar to the one being implemented for the highway project;

(b) if so, whether the Ministry has finalised the proposal in this regard;

(c) whether the project has been approved by the Ministry of Finance;

(d) if so, what is the total cost involved in the 5,000 kms. project;

(e) whether the three funding agencies, Japan, APB and World Bank, have shown interest in financing the project; and

(f) if so, by when the work on this project is likely to start?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) to (f) In order to expedite works on High Density Routes, a proposal for strengthening the Golden Quadrilateral and the Diagonals connecting the metropolitan cities of Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai is being developed by the Railways for multilateral funding. This proposal is yet to be sent to Ministry of Finance by the Railways. Some of the funding agencies have expressed interest in rendering assistance in executing the projects. Work is already in progress in some of the sanctioned projects on the Golden Quadrilateral with the resources provided in the Railways' Annual Plan.

Extension of Calcutta Metro Rail Project

3458. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU. Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had been having interaction with the West Bengal Government overextension of Calcutta Metro Rail Project, not only on the ongoing project from Tollygunj to Garia, but also on new areas in Howrah and Rajarhat; and