

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN): (a) and (b) It is proposed to declare West Coast Canal stretches and Udyogmandal and Champakara Canals in Kerala as National Waterway. Feasibility studies on Quilon-Kottapuram stretch of West Coast Canal and Champakara and Udyogmandal Canals have been completed. The feasibility studies comprising hydrographic survey and technoeconomic studies on the Kottapuram Badagara and Quilon-Trivandrum stretches of the West Coast Canal have been undertaken by the Inland Waterways Authority of India recently.

Censor of video news

174. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that video news magazines are being censored; and

(b) if so, what effect it is likely to have on the general policy of Government regarding free press?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. UPENDRA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. All films intended for public exhibition in India are required to be certified by the Central Board of Film Certification. "Film" includes a vide film. Therefore, video films, including newsreels meant for public exhibition, have to be presented to the Board for certification. The medium of cinema, both celluloid and video, is different from the print medium in their impact and reach. There is, therefore, pre-censorship for film medium. In view of this, it has no relation with the general policy of Government regarding free press.

Participation of Indian political leaders in a political conference in Kathmandu

175. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the reaction of the Nepalese Government about the participation of Indian political leaders in a political conference in Kathmandu; and

(b) whether Government of India approve this kind of activity by political leaders in foreign countries?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I. K. GUJRAL): (a) Government are not aware of any official reaction or demarche by the Government of Nepal on this subject.

(b) The Participation by Indian political leaders in the political conference in Kathmandu was outside the purview of Government of India. So the question of Government approving or otherwise does not arise.

International container exchange service at Cochin Port

176. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government of India have accepted in principle to have loading and unloading exchange service of the international containers at Cochin Port; and

(b) if so, what is the reason for the delay in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN): (a) and (b) A study has been commissioned to ascertain the techno-economic feasibility

lity of developing container transhipment facilities at Cochin. The final report has not been submitted.

National Highways in Tamil Nadu

177. SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of **SURFACE TRANSPORT** be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to convert certain State Highways in Tamil Nadu into National Highways; if so, the details thereof and the stage of proposals;

(b) what is the stage of the scheme to form a National Highways Ghat road through western Ghats to link up Trivandrum to Ambasamudram in Tamil Nadu; and

(c) when the work is expected to be taken up for execution and when it is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN): (a) In February, 1989, the Cochin-Madurai Road which covers a distance about 116 Kms. in Tamil Nadu has been declared as a National Highway. No decision to convert any other State Highway into a National Highway at present has been taken.

(b) There is no proposal to develop Trivandrum-Ambasamudram road as a National Highway.

(c) Does not arise.

Purchase of pistols from Szech Company

178. SHRI ASHOK NATH VERMA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had ordered purchase of pistols from M/s Merkurias - Czech Company;

(b) if so, what was the nature of the deal;

(c) whether the deal has been completed; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMAD SAYEED): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) An agreement was entered into with M/s Merkuria of Czechoslovakia for supply of 55,000 numbers pistols 9 mm for the use of police forces in the country. Since samples from the consignments received were tested and not found according to the specifications, the contract with the Firm was terminated. The firm backloaded the defective consignments at their cost.

National Highway between Dindigul and Kottayam

179. SHRI R. T. GOPALAN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is an urgent need for having a National Highway between Dindigul and Kottayam in view of the increasing trade and commerce in the border areas of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, extending from Dindigul;

(b) by when the construction of this important Highway will be taken up; and

(c) what steps Government have taken for immediate survey in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN): (a) Dindigul and Kottayam are already connected by a State Road and at present there is no proposal to include this road in the National Highway grid.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.