

ping companies are actively pursuing the acquisition proposals approved by the Government.

(c) and (d) The Shipping Credit & Investment Company of India Ltd. provides loans to private sector shipping companies at subsidised rate of interest. Guidelines framed by Government with the help of Shipping Credit & Investment Company of India Limited for rehabilitation of viable private sector shipping companies, include moratorium on repayment of loans, interest holiday for a limited period, rescheduling the repayment of loans etc. these measures would help potentially viable shipping companies.

Trains between Mysore and Bangalore

*128. SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the trains between Mysore and Bangalore are presently taking long time;

(b) whether there is any proposal to streamline the running time of these trains; and

(c) whether a non-stop train between Mysore and Bangalore is likely to be introduced in the near future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) and (b) There is some increase in journey time due to ongoing Broad Gauge conversion work on the section.

(c) No, Sir.

Indo-Pak talks

*129. SHRIMATI SURYAKANTA JAYAWANTRAO PATIL:
SHRI SURESH KALMADI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the schedule for holding the series of meetings between

Defence, Home and Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan and that of Joint Commission;

(b) what would be the likely agenda therefor; and

(c) what are the reasons for delay in holding these official meetings originally scheduled to start earlier this year?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS SHRI (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): (a) to (c) The Joint Commission meeting is scheduled for some time in July 1989. The other Secretary-level meetings are envisaged during the next eight weeks. All these will be held during the first half of 1989 as agreed during the meeting between our Prime Minister and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

The Joint Commission is expected to identify areas of cooperation in the fields of trade, economic cooperation, education, culture, information, sports, travel, tourism and consular matters. Defence Secretary, Home Secretary and Foreign Secretary level talks will focus on Siachen, the problem of terrorism, and bilateral and other issues respectively.

Constitution of Literacy Mission Authority

*130. SHRI SURENDRA SINGH THAKUR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether any survey has been conducted by Government to assess the present status of illiteracy in the country;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) what was the number of illiterates in the country at the end of 1987 and 1988;

(d) whether Government have constituted Literacy Mission Authority to

achieve the objectives of National Literacy Mission; and

(e) if so, what are the details thereof and the achievements of the Authority so far?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER): (a) to (c) The literacy data in the country are collected through decennial census. The present number of illiterates in the country will be known only after the next census is held in 1991.

(d) and (e) The National Literacy Mission Authority (NLMA) was constituted in June, 1988 to administer the National Literacy Mission. It is an independent and autonomous wing of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Department of Education) vested with full executive and financial powers in its sphere of working. It is the operating and implementing agency at the national level for all the activities envisaged in National Literacy Mission.

National Literacy Mission Authority has a Council headed by the Minister, Human Resource Development and an Executive Committee headed by the Union Education Secretary. Both Official and non-official members are represented on these two bodies. The Executive Committee carries out all the functions of the Authority in accordance with the policy and guidelines laid down by the Council.

Strengthening of administrative, academic and technical resource and media support, simplification of procedures and financial assistance to a good number of Voluntary Agencies, involvement of teachers, students, youth, women, ex-servicemen, prison management and staff and adoption of area specific plans and projects for complete eradication of illiteracy in specific areas and development of

techno-pedagogic inputs on a large scale are some of the significant achievements of the National Literacy Mission.

Privatisation of D.T.C. routes

***131. SHRI ANAND PRAKASH GAUTAM:** Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "To privatise or not" which appeared in the Times of India of the 16th April, 1989;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto;

(d) how long the present ad-hoc arrangement of 'Earn and Keep' with privately operated buses under DTC would continue.

(e) whether it is a fact that rationalisation of many routes is not being carried out by South Region of DTC because of impasse created by the ad-hoc arrangement; and

(f) if so, by when a permanent policy is likely to be evolved in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The news item mainly refers to irregularities in the operation of buses of private operators and suggests replacement of present arrangements of private operations by the erstwhile system of KM scheme, besides emphasising nationalisation of road transport services in the Union Territory of Delhi. For a number of years, DTC has been associating private operators, under one scheme or the other, to supplement their services to adequately meet the trans-