

(b) if so, whether any discussion was held with the Government of Kerala for the construction of Link-Road; and

(c) what decision has been taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI BUTA SINGH):

(a) to (c) Presumably, the Member is referring to the Link Road from Cochin Bypass of National Highway No. 47 to Cochin Port in Willingdon Island. The project is estimated to cost Rs. 669 lacs. After discussions with State Government, and Cochin Port Authorities, the Govt. of India have already agreed to share 1/3rd cost of this work, the balance cost being shared equally by the Cochin Port Trust and Kerala Government.

Presence of Naval strength in Indian Ocean

2317. SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the latest estimate of great powers naval presence in the Indian ocean, both mobile and static, sea-based and land-based;

(b) whether there is any indication of abnormal naval concentration in the Arabian Sea in recent months;

(c) whether the airfield in Diego Garcia is being upgraded to take B-52's;

(d) whether there is any indication of the deployment of nuclear weapons and nuclear-powered submarines in the Indian Ocean; and

(e) which countries in the littoral have provided shore facilities, temporary or permanent, exclusive or otherwise, to the naval vessels of the great powers?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): (a) It would not be in the public interest to reveal precise infor-

mation on Great Power naval presence in the Indian Ocean area.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) It is understood that B-52 aircraft can operate from Diego Garcia.

(d) It is understood that nuclear powered submarines are being deployed in the Indian Ocean area. It is likely that nuclear weapons have been deployed in the Indian Ocean though Government do not have conclusive evidence to this effect.

(e) In addition to the US base at Diego Garcia, it is understood that the U.S.A. has access to facilities in Kenya, Somalia, Oman and Australia; and the USSR to facilities in Ethiopia and the People's Republic of Yemen. Some other countries also provide non-exclusive facilities to naval vessels of third countries.

Cost of Handling Container at Madras Port

2318. SHRI M. S. RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that cost of handling containers is costlier at Madras Harbour than at Bombay and Cochin;

(b) whether it is also a fact that lesser number of workmen are employed for stuffing and destuffing containers at Madras Harbour in comparison with the workmen employed at Bombay and Cochin; and

(c) if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL): (a) It is not correct to say that the cost of handling container is higher at Madras than at Bombay. However, the cost of handling containers is higher at Madras than at Cochin.

(b) Yes.

(c) The number of workers required for handling containers is being determined by Ports, taking into consideration local conditions and labour arrangements.

Offer for Establishment of shorebased institution

2319. DR. SHANTI G. PATEL: Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Maharashtra have offered suitable place for the establishment of a shore-based institution for training of navigating officers on West Coast;

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

(c) whether any action has been taken by the Government of India thereon?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Wagons of Jumbo freight trains

2320. SHRI ABDUL REHMAN SHEIKH:
SHRI LADLI MOHAN
NIGAM:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that each wagon of the Jumbo freight trains is loading five extra tonnes of load and that the diesel and electric locos haul trailing loads beyond the technically permissible level;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) what is the number of loco failures on the various zonal railways as a result thereof; and

(d) what steps Government have taken to improve the situation?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIA-

MENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MAL-LIKARJUN): (a) There are no instructions to permit loading of BCX and CRT wagons, which comprise Jumbo freight trains, by extra five tonnes above carrying capacity. Present instructions permit loading of these wagons up to carrying capacity plus two tonnes only. The whole train does not constitute a load beyond the capacity of diesel and electric locos.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Decision to widen the Torsa bridge

2321. SHRI PRASENJIT BARMAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision to widen the Torsa bridge near Cooch Behar Station on Alipurduar Junction—Bamanhat M. G. Railway line on N.F. Railway; and

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

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MAL-LIKARJUN): (a) No.

(b) Does not arise.

Decentralisation of the Railway Service Commission

2322. SHRI PRASENJIT BARMAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to decentralise the Railway Service Commission; and

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

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MAL-LIKARJUN): (a) Yes.

(b) Does not arise.