

Construction of Places of Worship in Gulf States

*268. SHRI JASWANT SINGH:

SHRI HARISHANKAR
BHABHRA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state whether it is a fact that a majority of the Gulf States do not permit the construction of any places of worship, other than Islamic ones, in their territories; and if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): The countries in the Gulf do not, according to current regulations, permit construction of any new places of worship other than the Islamic ones. However, there is a temple in Bahrain, a temple and a gurdwara in Dubai and a temple and 3 gurdwaras in Oman. There are churches in States like Kuwait, UAE, Bahrain and Oman.

Decline in Railway Freight Traffic

*269. SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to the graph drawing on page 78-79 of "India Today" of November 16, 30th issue, showing that railway freight traffic has come down from 92.3 million tonnes in April-September, 1978 to 90.5 million tonnes in April-September, 1980;

(b) if so, what are the causes for this reduction in traffic; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFAR SHARIEF): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The major factors resulting in shortfall in loading of goods traffic have been disturbances in Assam, extensive power cuts in the eastern sector affecting performance of marshalling yards and workshops, resulting in turn, to repairs to less wagons and locomotives, less demand for raw materials to steel plants, labour troubles in mines at Bailadilla affecting movement of iron ore for export, closure of refineries in the eastern sector affecting loading of POL products, increased movement of foodgrains from Punjab and Haryana over longer leads due to drought conditions, steep drop in demands for loading of sugarcane, floods and breaches on Western, Northern and South Eastern Railways, and staff agitations on a number of Railways. Most of these reasons were beyond Railways' control.

(c) Efforts are being made to improve the performance by closely monitoring the movement on day-to-day basis at the Zonal Railways' as well as Railway Board's level. Greater co-ordination is also being maintained with different agencies to improve the wagon turn-round. The help of State Governments is being sought to improve the law and order situation. Staff agitations are being dealt with suitably. Apart from procuring additional wagons to supplement the present holding of wagons, action is also being taken to reduce the number of sick wagons by giving the highest priority to their repairs.

Talks Held with Burma's President Ne Win

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

(a) whether the longstanding bilateral problems between India and Burma were taken up during the re-