

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) and (b) Although the Maharashtra Government had proposed twelve routes, 3,561 Kms. in length, for being taken over as National Highways in the Fifth Plan, the Auranga-bad-Hyderabad road was not included in their proposal. Only a part of this road in a length of 13 Kms. is covered by the State Government's proposal. In any case, due to financial constraints and other priority considerations, it has not been possible for the Government to take over any of the proposed routes as National Highway.

Nuclear tests by South Africa

1034. SHRI J. K. JAIN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention have been drawn to a report in the 'Times of India' of 16th July, 1980, with regard to a nuclear test carried out by South Africa recently;

(b) whether the details of the blast have been detected by any agency; and

(c) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) According to press reports, a signal from a U.S. Ve-la Satellite at 0052 hrs GMT on 22.9.79 had led to the conjecture that South Africa might have conducted a nuclear explosion. The reports also indicated that no radio activity was detected even though the characteristics of the light pulses recorded by the Satellite could be indicative of the explosion of a nuclear bomb. Press reports also said that the U.S. Government Agencies, which had instituted enquiries into the reported nuclear explosion, have not been able to conclude that a nuclear explosion did take place. South Africa had,

however denied any knowledge of any nuclear explosion having occurred in, or in the vicinity of, Southern Africa.

Bonded labour in West Bengal and Kerala

1035. SHRI J. K. JAIN: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether any assessment about the number of bonded labourers in West Bengal and Kerala has ever been made and if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(b) whether the West Bengal and Kerala Governments have responded to the Centrally sponsored scheme for rehabilitation of bonded labour and if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI T. ANJIAH): (a) and (b) The Government of Kerala have reported 700 identified and freed bonded labourers as on 31.3.1980, of which only 392 remain to be rehabilitated. The Government of West Bengal have stated that they have no bonded labour and that therefore no Central assistance was required. Details regarding the progress of the rehabilitation programmes for bonded labour in Kerala are given below:

For 1980-81, the proposals of the Government of Kerala are under consideration. Details have been asked for from the State Government, which are awaited.

(as on 31-3-1980)

Identified and freed	Rehabilitated			Remaining to be rehabilitated
	Under on-going schemes	during 1978-79	during 1979-80	
700	138	110	60	392
Amounts sanctioned (Rs. in lakhs)				
1978-79	.	.	1.65	
1979-80	.	.	0.60	