

Afghanistan the U.S. Government was prepared to recommend legislation which would permit economic and military assistance to Pakistan as an exception to above mentioned legislation.]

#### **Stage carriage permits to Scheduled Castes**

1236. SHRI V. P. MUNUSAMY: Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that stage carriage permits under the provisions of Motor Vehicles Act, 1978 have been issued to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes bus operators in other states of the Southern region whereas such permits have been denied to eligible Scheduled Castes applicants in the Union Territory of Pondicherry;

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

(c) whether it is also a fact that while denying such a permit to the Scheduled Castes operators permits for four regular routes have been issued to operators of other communities in violation of the spirit and contents of the amended Act; and

(d) whether it is a fact that a three-member-committee was constituted on 19th April, 1979 to study the various provisions of the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 1978 has not completed its work and if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI A. P. SHARMA): (a) to (c). According to the information furnished by the Pondicherry Administration, during 1979 and upto February 1980, the total of 4 regular permits were issued by them, of which 3 regular permits were issued to general applicants and 1 regular permit was issued to the only eligible Scheduled Caste applicant. In view of this it will not be correct to say that

regular permits have been denied to Scheduled Castes operators.

(d) The Pondicherry Administration has stated that a three member-committee constituted in April, 1979 to study various provisions of the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 1978 could not complete its work yet as the Committee had felt that it would like to be guided by the action taken by the Tamil Nadu Government with regard to the implementation of the above mentioned provisions.

#### **Bilateral agreements with Pakistan**

1237. SHRI IBRAHIM KALANIYA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that after the bilateral agreements between India and Pakistan a number of Pakistani and Indian nationals have been issued visas from Pakistan and India;

(b) if so, what is the number of visas issued from each side;

(c) whether it is a fact that Indian nationals who wish to visit Pakistan to meet their relatives in that country are facing difficulties for getting visas from the Pakistan Embassy in India; and

(d) if so, what action Government propose to take in the matter?

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

(b) During the calendar year 1979 our Embassy at Islamabad and Consulate General at Karachi together issued 197,474 visas to Pakistani nationals. Attempts are being made to obtain corresponding figures from the Pakistan authorities.

(c) We have received certain reports about the difficulties being faced by Indian nationals in getting visas for going to Pakistan. According to our information, while the Pakistan Embassy in New Delhi grants visas on

priority basis in cases of emergency, in other cases issuance or refusal of visas sometimes does take considerable time.

(d) Visas are granted by both countries to nationals of each other in terms of the Indo-Pak Visa Agreement signed in September, 1974. Whenever difficulties arise in matters relating to the grant of visas either Government is free to take up the matter with the other Government and, in fact does so.

#### **New railway lines for Orissa**

1238. SHRI LAKSHMANA MAHAPATRO; Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Orissa Government have furnished a

priority list to his Ministry for construction/conversion of railway lines in the State;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard and what is the progress so far made in regard to each of them; and

(c) whether Central Government have taken up or are considering to take up the resurvey of the Besham-pur-Phulbain line in the changed policy of paying greater attention to backward areas.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFAR SHARIEF): (a) to (c). A statement is attached.

#### **Statement**

(a) and (b). Yes. Government of Orissa in November, 1978 draw up a priority list of for construction/conversion of railway lines in that State. The position in respect of each of those lines is given below:—

Name of the Project	Present position
1. Jakhapura—Banspani (approx. length : 160 Kms. )	Construction of the first phase from Jakhapura to Daitari is well in progress and this strength is expected to be completed by December, 1980. Work on the remaining portion from Daitari to Banspati will be started as soon as adequate funds are available.
2. Talchar—Sambalpur (approx. length : 160 Kms. )	The Preliminary Engineering-cum-traffic survey for this new rail link sanctioned in 1978-79 is still in progress and is expected to be completed by middle of 1980.
3. Koraput -Rayagada (approx. length : 90 Kms. )	Preliminary Engineering -cum-traffic survey for the rail links from Koraput-Salur/Parvatipuram / Rayagada is being carried out by M/s Rail India Technical and Economic Services and the Survey is expected to be completed by the middle of 1980.
4. Line connecting any two points between Khurda Road and Berhampur on the South and Bolangir & Rayagada on the West. (approx. length : 120 Kms.)	(*)
5. Conversion of Rupsa—Dangiriposi narrow gauge into broad gauge and its extension. (Approx. length : 100 Kms )	The reconnaissance Engineering cum-traffic survey for conversion of Rupsa-Dangiriposi narrow gauge into broad gauge and its extension upto a suitable point on the Howrah-Bombay main line is nearing completion and the survey report is expected to be ready in a couple of months.