

(b) whether it has also been reported that Russian forces have also encircled the Indian territory;

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

(d) what action Government propose to take in this regard?

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

(b) to (d) No reports have come to the attention of the government which suggest that Russian forces have encircled Indian territory.

Deployment of American and Russian Naval fleet in the Indian Ocean

123. SHRI SHIVA CHANDRA JHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the American and Russian naval fleet have been deployed in the Indian Ocean; and

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction in this regard?

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

(b) The Government of India view this escalating military presence of the Super Powers in the Indian Ocean as a matter of grave concern. Consistent with our established policy, we would like the elimination of all foreign military presence from this area.

Increase in the salaries and allowances of Members of Parliament

124. SHRI SHIVA CHANDRA JHA: Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to increase the salaries and allowances of the Members of Parliament;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BHISHMA NARAIN SINGH): (a) to (c) No proposal is at present under the consideration of Government to increase the salaries and allowances of Members of Parliament. Ordinarily Government initiate action in the matter of increase in the salary and allowances of Members on the recommendation of the Joint Committee on Salaries and allowances of Members of Parliament.

Introduction of new fast trains in the Southern region

125. SHRI B. SATYANARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to introduce more fast running trains to Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala in view of the growing public demand and long distance involved; and

(b) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) No, not at present.

(b) Due to line capacity constraints on trunk routes it is not operationally feasible to introduce in the immediate future additional trains from Delhi to the Southern States, like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Licentiate course in medicine

126. SHRI BISHAMBHAR NATH PANDE: Will the Minister of HEALTH be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the three year licentiate course in medicine, which was persistently being opposed by the Medical Council of India, has been revived;

(b) if the answer to part (a) above be in the negative, whether Government propose to reconsider the proposal in view of the reluctance of MBBS degree holders to go to the villages and to encourage the doctors with qualifications in licentiate course to go to the villages?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH (SHRI NIHAR RANJAN LASKAR): (a) No.

(b) Government is examining the various aspects of the matter in consultation with all concerned.

Underground Railway Project at Calcutta

127. SHRI BISHAMBHAR NATH PANDE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of progress made so far on the underground Railway Project at Calcutta; and

(b) by when the project is going to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) Work on the underground Railway Project in Calcutta is in progress along the length from Dum Dum to Belgachia, through Chitpur Yard and from Esplanade to Tollyganj. The shield tunnelling contract for the tunnelling work between Chitpur and Shyambazar has been awarded and the work taken up. The prototype rolling stock is under manufacture in the Integral Coach Factory, Madras. Tenders for some of the contract sections between Shyambazar and Esplanade are under consideration.

The overall physical progress of construction work upto date is 22 per cent.

(b) The project is likely to be completed by 1986-87 subject to the availability of adequate resources.

128. [Transferred to the 29th January, 1980].

Bhutanese diplomatic missions in Washington and Peking

129. SHRI BISHAMBHAR NATH PANDE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the King of Bhutan has recently sought India's permission for opening Bhutanese diplomatic missions in Washington, Peking and Bangladesh; and

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

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): (a) and (b) The King of Bhutan had informed us of his intention to exchange resident diplomatic missions with Bangladesh in September 1979. Bhutan has since set up an Embassy in Dacca on January 8, 1980. Bangladesh has also opened an Embassy in Thimphu on the same day. Bhutan has no plans to open diplomatic missions in Washington and Peking at present.

Congestion at major ports

130. SHRI JAGJIT SINGH ANAND: Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that congestion has assumed serious proportions at all major ports in the country;

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

(c) what steps are proposed to be taken to tackle the problem of congestion at these ports?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI A. P. SHARMA): (a) to (c) No. Out of the 10 Major Ports in the country, Calcutta, Madras and Bombay have been facing congestion for some time. The position at Bombay and Madras, however, has considerably improved in the recent past. Of late, there has been some improvement at Calcutta also.