

SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI CHAND RAM): (a) and (b) There has been some under-utilisation of capacity of the Hindustan Shipyard Ltd. because of lack of orders for building ships. However, the position has improved with the receipt of orders for 3 vessels from Shipping Corporation of India in January, 1979. Orders for 4 more vessels are likely to be received from the SCI shortly.

Happenings in Indo-China

329. SHRI SITARAM KESRI:
SHRI BUDDHA PRIYA
MAURYA;

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state what is Government's reaction to the situation reportedly created as a result of the recent flare-up in the Indo-China *vis-a-vis* threat to peace and security in the South East Asian countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SAMARENDRA KUNDU): The situation in Indo-China has been tense and inflamed for the last few months. This has caused a setback to the process, which at one time looked hopeful, of cooperative relations being developed in the South East Asian region.

We would like to see peace and tranquility prevail in this region so that the nations, in their independence, can resume economic and other cooperation in the region. We are in consultation with other countries regarding possible steps that we could all take together to prevent the further deterioration in the situation. The Minister for External Affairs has already made a statement in the House on February 20 on the reported attack by China on Vietnamese territory and the Government of India's reaction thereto.

Hospitality to an M.P. from Fiji by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations

330. SHRI VITHAL GADGIL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that

hospitality extended to a Member of Parliament from Fiji was withdrawn by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations when he visited India recently;

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

(c) whether it is also a fact that the visiting Member of Parliament from Fiji sought an appointment with the ex-Prime Minister Shrimati Indira Gandhi?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SAMARENDRA KUNDU): (a) No, Sir. He was in fact treated as a guest of the I.C.C.R.

(b) Does not arise:

(c) Senator Kaur Bhattan Singh, M.P. from Fiji sought an appointment with Shrimati Indira Gandhi in his "private capacity (not through the ICCR). ICCR has been informed that he met Shrimati Gandhi,

Visit of Indian artists to South Africa

331. SHRI VITHAL GADGIL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some Indian artists recently visited South Africa and participated in various programmes there; and

(b) if so, whether they were issued passports for South Africa?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SAMARENDRA KUNDU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Some Indian artists have visited South Africa by Indian citizens for cultural organisation of the persons of Indian origin there.

Occasional private visits to South Africa by Indian citizens for cultural or religious purposes had been permitted since many on a very restricted basis. Endorsements for South Africa restricted for a period of three months were granted in such cases on the basis of a written undertaking