

Temporary Landing Permit from 72 hours to 7 days, further liberalisation of Tourist Baggage Rules and increased publicity and promotional efforts through the overseas offices in Europe, North America, Japan, Australia as well as special efforts on the part of the Indian travel trade, Indian Missions and offices of National carriers are some of the steps taken by the Government to promote travel to India.

International Tourist Weeks have been celebrated in various parts of the country to coincide with Indian festivals. These were designed to publicise Indian festivals, as also to create unawareness of the importance of tourism within the country.

ACTION AGAINST APEEJAY SHIPPING CO.

*726. SHRIMATI SARLA BHADARIA : Will the Minister of TRANSPORT AND SHIPPING be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have taken action against the Apeejay Shipping Company;

(b) if so, the details thereof ; and

(c) if not, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND SHIPPING (PROF. V. K. R. V. RAO) : (a) to (c) Government have been advised that so far as the Company is concerned no legal action is possible. However, it is proposed to take departmental action against the Company. For this purpose a show cause notice will have to be served on the Company. But before this can be done it is necessary to wait for the judgment of the Calcutta High Court on the writ petition filed by the Company against the banning order issued by the Iron and Steel Controller in May 1966. In that case the Court has issued an interim injunction in the face of which any action taken by the Government against the Company is liable to expose Government to the charge of contempt of court.

The hearings in that case were concluded in August 1967 but the judgment has been reserved. Further progress in this case can be made only after the judgment has been delivered.

CHANGES IN THE HANDLING OF CARGO IN INDIAN PORTS

*727. SARDAR RAM SINGH : Will the Minister of TRANSPORT AND SHIPPING be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the former Director General of Shipping has urged that in order to take the freight differences to the advantage of the Indian traders, drastic changes should be brought about in the handling of big container ships and loading and unloading of cargo at the Indian ports ;

(b) whether any scheme has recently been drawn up in this connection ; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND SHIPPING (PROF. V. K. R. V. RAO) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The matter was under consideration. Even before the former Director General of Shipping made his speech to which reference has been made, Committees with representatives of associated interests have been set up at Bombay and Calcutta ports to examine all aspects relating to handling of container traffic. The question was also considered by the recent Conference on Shipping, Shipbuilding and Ports, convened by the Ministry of Transport and Shipping.

NATIONAL HIGHWAY No. 31

*728. SHRI SRIMAN PRAFULLA GOSWAMI : Will the Minister of TRANSPORT AND SHIPPING be pleased to state :

(a) the year in which the National Highway No. 31 was taken over by Government ;

(b) what was the total original estimate for the project ;

(c) what are the reasons for the delay in the completion of the portion lying between Nalbari and Rangiya with diversion and Railway crossings in the district of Kamrup ; and

(d) by when this portion will be completed?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND SHIPPING (SHI BHAKT DARSHAN):

(a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

STATEMENT

(a) Presumably the Member is seeking information in respect of the portion of National Highway No. 31 lying in Assam. The portion of this National Highway from Baxirhat to North Salmara was taken over, like other existing National Highways, in 1947. In 1963, this National Highway was extended from North Salmara to Amingaon in Assam.

(b) The Highways included in the National Highway Scheme were taken over by the Government of India without any compensation to the State Governments. The original estimated cost of the development of the portion of National Highway No. 31 lying in Assam i.e. from Baxirhat to Amingaon was Rs. 13.4 crores

(c) Completion of the road portion of National Highway No. 31 between Nalbari and Rangiya has been delayed primarily on account of the floods in the Pagladia river.

There are two proposed over-bridges in place of the existing Road-Rail level-crossings in the District of Kamrup; one at Rangiya and another at Ghograpar. At both places, the work on diversion has been taken up, but further progress has been held up due to non-finalisation of the scheme for over-bridges. At Rangiya, Assam Government desire to retain the existing level-crossing in addition to having an over-bridge or a level crossing on the diversion. This is not acceptable to the Railway authorities as the distance between the two would hardly be a furlong. The matter is, however, in correspondence. At Ghograpar, the proposal has been accepted by the Railways and the construction of the over-bridge is included in their schedule of works for execution during the current year. The delay is on account of the settlement of the question of the angle of crossing. This is being taken up with the Railways.

(d) The portion of the road, including the diversions between Nalbari and Rangiya, is expected to be completed by the end of December, 1968.

THEFT OF CARS AND SCOOTERS IN DELHI

*729. SHRI SITARAM JAIPURIA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that theft of cars and scooters are on the increase in Delhi;

(b) if so, the number of thefts of cars and scooters separately which occurred during the last one year;

(c) whether it is a fact that the stolen cars are being used for smuggling liquor; and

(d) if so, the steps taken to curb the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA): (a) There has been a slight increase in the number of such cases.

(b) 129 cars and 143 scooters were reported to have been stolen during the current year upto 15-12-1967.

(c) 2 cases were detected in which stolen cars were used for smuggling liquor.

(d) An Auto-Theft Squad has been created in the Delhi Police to deal with such cases. Statistics and intelligence about car thieves with details are circulated to police stations for surveillance. Patrolling is also intensified and traps are laid in the affected areas. Plain clothes men are also deployed for this purpose.

BAN ON RECRUITMENT TO MINISTERIAL CADRES

*730. SHRI P. K. KUMARAN: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether recruitment to ministerial cadres has been banned since 1962;

(b) when was the ban lifted and re-imposed; and