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**Missing of natural rubber with Bitumin for
constructing roads**

2111. SHRI K.N. BALAGOPAL: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government agencies did any study regarding the positive effect of mixing 'Natural Rubber' with Bitumin for constructing roads, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether the life and quality of roads are found to have increased due to this mixing; and

(c) whether Government will take further steps to study the usage of Natural Rubber with Bitumin?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI TUSHARBHAI CHAUDHARY): (a) and (b) Studies have been got done by the Government through Central Road Research Institute on the use of modified bitumen including natural rubber modified bitumen in construction and maintenance of roads. As per findings of the study, natural rubber modified bitumen improves the durability of roads by reducing susceptibility towards temperature variations and improving the desirable properties of bitumen thereby giving overall better performance.

(c) The use of binders, including natural rubber, in modified bitumen has been prescribed in the Indian Roads Congress publication, IRC:SP:53-2010.

National highways under construction

†2112. SHRI BRIJLAL KHABRI: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of national highways being constructed in the country by Government at present;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

- (b) whether construction of all highways will be completed within the scheduled time;
- (c) if not, the number of highways whose construction will be completed on time and the number of highways, whose construction will not be completed on time;
- (d) the reasons for construction work not being completed on time; and
- (e) the steps Government will take to ensure speedy completion of the construction work of the highways, lagging behind the stipulated time?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI TUSHARBHAI CHAUDHARY): (a) to (e) The construction and maintenance of National Highways (NHs) is a continuous process. There has been delay in implementation of 88 major projects being implemented by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). The delays are due to problems such as land acquisition, shifting of utilities, environmental and forest clearance, approval for rail over bridges, law and order problem as well as shortage of skilled/semi-skilled manpower, poor performance of contractors and economic slowdown. In order to expedite implementation of the projects, Regional Offices have been set up by NHAI headed by Chief General Manager. Powers have been delegated to the Chief General Managers. Special land acquisition units are also set up to expedite land acquisition. Chief Secretaries of State Government have also been nominated as Nodal officers to expedite construction of highway projects. Projects are also closely and periodically reviewed at Headquarter as well as field units. Recently, the issues of delinking environmental clearance from forest clearance and exempting linear stretches from the requirement of NOC from Gram Sabha have been resolved. Reserve Bank of India has given dispensation to treat the debt due to lenders, to the extent assured by Project Authorities in terms of concession agreement, as secured loan. Disinvestment of 100% equity to other willing buyers has been allowed after completion of the construction and also substitution of concessionaire allowed after achievement of financial closure to salvage the languishing projects. The NHAI has also constituted Negotiation/Reconciliation Settlement Committees and also High Level Expert Settlement Advisory Committee to settle the claims/disputes.

Poor plight of highways

2113. DR. KANWAR DEEP SINGH: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has taken note of the poor plight of highways during the monsoon season across the country;