

(a) the State-wise details of present status of National Highways (NHs) as well as State roads in North Eastern Region (NER) handed over to Border Roads Organisation (BRO) for improvement, construction and maintenance purposes, road-wise;

(b) whether the handing and taking over process of Missamari-Rangapara-Balipara road in Sonitpur district of Assam has been completed in consideration of priority;

(c) if so, the details thereof along with total outlay and allocation made indicating acquired funding provision and target set for completion of the road; and

(d) if not, the reasons for inordinate delay in taking over process including details of steps taken by Government to expedite the process?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) State-wise details of National Highways and other roads in NER with Border Roads Organisation (BRO), is given below:

State	NH Km	Other roads Km
Assam	304.56	363.74
Tripura	475.25	511.04
Manipur	663.92	1221.06
Nagaland	221.50	755.31
Sikkim	52.00	1055.15
West Bengal	41.00	96.30
Arunachal Pradesh	972.00	6837.25
Mizoram	-	1061.79

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) Total outlay for improvement of road Missamari-Rangapara-Balipara is Rs. 6698.84 lacs. Annual target for FY 2013-14 is Rs. 748.00 lacs. The probable date of completion of the road is 2017.

Abolition of groupings of regiments on caste, region and religion basis

1581. DR. CHANDAN MITRA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to abolish the groupings of regiments on caste, region and religion lines in the Indian Army, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(b) the steps taken by Government to stop discrimination of youth on caste-cum-region-cum-religion basis in regard to recruitments in Indian Army?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) The policy of the Government has been not to raise any new regiment on the basis of any particular class, creed, community, region or religion but to have an Army in which all Indians have representation. Regiments are raised keeping in view national security scenario, threat assessment and operational necessity. There is no discrimination in recruitment to the Army which is based on merit and is open to all candidates of all communities without any discrimination.

Foreign training for Navy personnel

1582. SHRI AMBETH RAJAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Navy personnel are sent to foreign countries for training;

(b) if so, the criteria fixed by Government to send Navy personnel for training to foreign countries; and

(c) the details of the personnel belonging to SC/ST category who were sent to foreign training during the last five years?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Officers are selected for training to foreign countries based on course specifications projected by host country, *inter-se* merit, recommendations in Confidential Reports, qualification in professional examinations and medical fitness.

(c) The Navy does not maintain details of personnel sent for foreign training caste/category-wise as selection is not based on these factors.

Blacklisting of Agusta Westland company

†1583. SHRI THAAWAR CHAND GEHLOT: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering to scrap the Rs. 3600 crore VVIP helicopter deal with Agusta Westland and blacklist this Anglo-Italian company;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.