

[English]

**New Bridge connecting western side of Cochin city with Cochin Port**

5559. PROF. K. V. THOMAS: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the safety period of the Mattanchery bridge connecting the western side of the Cochin city with the Cochin Port is over;

(b) if so, whether a new bridge is proposed to be constructed; and

(c) the steps taken by Cochin Port Authorities to ensure the safety of the bridge for regular traffic?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI K.P. UNNIKRIISHNAN): (a) The Mattancherry bridge is about 50 years old and is weak and narrow. There is no specific safety period for the bridge.

(b) There is no proposal for the Cochin Post Trust to construct a new bridge in replacement of the existing one.

(c) In order to ensure safety of the bridge, the port has imposed load restrictions on the vehicles using the bridge. Regular maintenance of the bridge is attended to by Cochin Port Trust.

A number of representations and suggestions to re build the bridge have been received recently and these proposals would be examined.

**Refusal of Auto-Rickshaw Drivers to take Passengers for Short Distance**

5560. SHRI P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether auto-rickshaw drivers at the railway stations in Delhi/New Delhi often refuse to take passengers for short distance and quite often overcharge the passengers; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to put a stop to this practice?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI K.P. UNNIKRIISHNAN): (a) Several such complaints have been received by the Delhi Police and State Transport Authority.

(b) Delhi Administration has intimated that plain clothes staff have been deployed at vulnerable places and the erring drivers are prosecuted. Strict action is taken against the violators of permit conditions. On conviction by a Court, the permit is suspended upto 30 days and the vehicle is impounded. Free postage complaint cards are distributed to the public at important places like Railway Stations, ISBT etc. The Delhi Traffic Police have an assistance booth at the Railway Stations to ensure that the passengers are not harassed by the auto-rickshaw and taxi drivers.

[Translation]

**S.T.D. Facility in Gujarat**

5561. SHRI RATILAL KALIDAS VARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to provide STD facility to Botad, Gaddha, Dhambuka, Bavla, Mandal, Viramgaon and Sanad in Gujarat; and

(b) if so, by what time this facility is likely to be provided?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS

TIONS (SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The S.T.D. facility at Botad has been provided recently. Remaining stations are proposed to be provided with this facility progressively during the 8th plan period subject to the availability of equipment.

[English]

**Retirement benefit to Erstwhile Employees of Rivers Steam Navigation Company**

5562. SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Rivers Steam Navigation Company Limited was taken over and merged with Central Inland Water Transport Corporation;

(b) whether employees of the erstwhile Rivers Steam Navigation Company were also taken back and their services have been considered as continuous;

(c) whether these employees are getting all retirement benefits; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN): (a) and (b). The Rivers Steam Navigation Company Limited (R.S.N. Company) was a Sterling company incorporated in England in 1914. On 6.2.1965, Government of India acquired all the shares of R.S.N. Company. The Central Inland Water Transport Corporation (CIWTC) was set up in February, 1967. Board on a Scheme of Arrangement approved by Calcutta High Court on 3.5.1967, the assets and only some of the liabilities of the R.S.N. Company were taken over by the

CIWTC. The Scheme of Arrangement provided, *inter alia*, that the CIWTC would take as many of the staff and labour of the R.S.N. Company as as possible under the circumstances. In accordance with the Scheme of Arrangement, the R.S.N. Company declared closure on 3.5.1967. Thereafter, a majority of the employees out of 8170 employees of R.S.N. Company were given employment by CIWTC on fresh terms and conditions and they were taken as new entrants.

(c) and (d). Those employees who joined CIWTC as new entrants are getting retirement benefits at the time of their retirement from CIWTC. However, gratuity is being paid separately for their service under R.S.N. Company and separately for their service under CIWTC.

**Audited of Cooperative Banks and Societies**

5563. SHRI RAM SAGAR (Saidpur): Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Registrar, Cooperative Societies, Delhi has not conducted audit in respect of Cooperative Banks, Societies, etc., consequent to which a large number of people have been cheated and facing financial crisis;

(b) if so, the details of Cooperative Banks, Societies, etc., whose accounts remain to be audited as yet;

(c) the reasons therefor; and

(d) the details of action taken or contemplated in this regard?

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI DEVI LAL): (a) to (d). The Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Delhi gets the accounts of