

SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) and (b) 10 schemes on National Highway No. 8, 1 each on NH 8A, 8B, 8C and 15 for widening are scheduled for completion during 1994-95. These are in various stages of progress.

(c) and (d) There has been delay in completion of 2 schemes on NH 8 due to slow progress by the contractors on account of shortage of labour and material and also heavy monsoon.

New Post Offices in States

729. SHRI SHANTARAM POTDUKHE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received any requests from the states for opening new post offices during the current financial year;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the number of proposals received from each State, State-wise to open new post offices;

(c) whether the Government have taken any steps to accede to the requests from the states to open new post offices;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to overcome the huge deficit on the sale of post cards and revenue stamps?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) to (d) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(e) It is proposed to introduce a new category of post card to discourage the diversion of post cards for the purpose of TV Quiz programmes etc. Revenue stamps are sold through post offices on behalf of the State Government. State Governments have been requested to pay suitable commission on their sales.

Amendment to Merchant Shipping Act

730. DR. P. VALLAL PERUMAN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to amend Merchant Shipping Act, 1958;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have received any request from Shipping Companies in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Based on the recommendations of a Committee, amendments to sections 21, 42, 45, 51, 412 and 414 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, were effected in 1993, since these were considered of urgent nature. Government propose to further amend certain other provisions of the Act relating to vital aspects like doing away with the

requirement of prior publication of certain rules made under the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958; limiting the functions of the National Shipping Board; registration of Indian Ships; reporting for change of Master of an Indian vessel; and certification of officers' powers in regard to prescribing manning scale for different types of ships etc.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The proposals in para (b) will cover such requests from the Shipping Companies.

Maintenance of National Highways in North Eastern States

731. SHRI NURUL ISLAM: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the amount allocated to each of the State of North Eastern region during 1991-92, 1992-93 and 1993-94 for repair and maintenance of National Highways;

(b) whether National Highway No. 37 is in bad shape from Agia to Mahendraganj via Singimari connecting Assam and Meghalaya; and

(c) if so, the steps taken to improve the condition of this National Highway?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) Amount allocated to each State of the North Eastern region during 1991-92, 1992-93 and 1993-94 for Maintenance & Repair of National Highways is given below:

Amount allocated (Rs. lakhs)

Name of State	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94
Arunachal Pradesh	116.29	103.67	216.33
Assam	1331.05	1452.57	1483.35
Manipur	167.41	191.22	199.69
Meghalaya	225.44	208.88	263.04
Nagaland	163.33	194.54	216.80
Mizoram	183.46	166.38	520.38
Tripura	56.31	74.02	145.45

(b) and (c) Road from Agia to Mahendraganj via Singimari is a State Road and not a National Highway. Improvement of this road is therefore, the responsibility of the State Govts. of Assam and Meghalaya.

[Translation]

Supply of Inferior Quality Medicine by C.G.H.S. Authorised Chemists

732. SHRI SURYA NARAYAN YADAV:
SHRI KESRI LAL:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether authorised suppliers of drugs are supplying sub-standard medicines to the C.G.H.S. Dispensaries of Delhi;