

- (a) whether the Prime Minister visited Malaysia recently;
- (b) if so, the objectives of the visit;
- (c) the issues that were discussed during the visit and the outcome of the visit;
- (d) whether any agreements were signed during the visit; and
- (e) if so, the salient features of the agreements agreement-wise?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Shri R.L. Bhatia) : (a) Yes, Sir. Prime Minister visited Malaysia from August, 2-5, 1995.

(b) The visit was part of our policy of strengthening our traditional friendship and cooperation with Malaysia, and also in the larger framework of our interest in further developing our relations with the countries of South-East Asia.

(c) Matters of mutual interest relating to bilateral relations, as well as regional and international issues were discussed. The visit has led to a better understanding of each other perceptions and concerns. It is expected that it will also give stimulus to bilateral economic cooperation.

(d) Yes, Sir, Five Agreements/MOUs were signed in the presence of the two Prime Ministers.

- (e)(i) MOU on Cooperation in the development of Highways — to deal with the formulation of strategy for the planning, development and implementation of the Super National Highway Project in India.
- (ii) Agreement for the Promotion and Protection of investment — to create favourable conditions for investment in each other's country and to protect investments.
- (iii) Agreement for the Provision of Technical Training and Consultancy Services between Malaysian Space and Telecom Research Consortium (MAXSTAR) and Antrix Corporation Ltd. — to provide technical training and technical consultancy service to Malaysia in the field of space science, in particular satellite programmes, as well as assisting the overall development of Malaysia's Space Science Programme.
- (iv) MOU between Doordarshan and MEASAT Broadcast Network System for collaboration to jointly develop quality new programmes, produce a premium channel of Indian programmes and to market an encrypted Direct To User (DTU) satellite broadcasting service in India.
- (v) MOU between the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) and Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (MIDA), to assist in promotion and development of industrial cooperation and overseas investment between India and Malaysia.

REPAIR OF KOLVALE BRIDGE

1883. Shri Harish Narayan Prabhu Zantye : Will the Minister of Surface Transport be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to reconstruct the Kolvale bridge in Pernem Taluka in Goa to facilitate the local people;

(b) if so, the details thereof and funds provided for the purpose during the current year alongwith the time schedule for its execution; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

The Minister of State of the Ministry of Surface Transport (Shri Jagdish Tytler) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Fresh tenders for completion of balance work are being invited by the State Government. An amount of Rs. 50 lakh has been earmarked for this work during the current financial year 1995-96 and the work is likely to be completed in 2 years after its award.

(c) Does not arise.

[Translation]

PASSPORT OFFICE IN WESTERN STATES

1884. Shri N.J. Rathva : Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state :

(a) the number of applications lying pending in passport offices in western states particularly in Gujarat;

(b) whether any time limit has been fixed for disposal of passport applications;

(c) whether this time limit is being adhered to so as to avoid pendency; and

(d) the steps being taken/proposed to be taken for the early disposal of pending applications?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Shri R.L. Bhatia) : (a) The total number of applications pending in passport offices of Maharashtra and Gujarat as on August 4, 1995 is 38,463 and 15,193 respectively.

(b) and (c) For functional and practical reasons, it has not been found possible to fix a time limit for issue of a fresh passport.

(d) Various steps have been taken for disposal of pending applications such as augmentation of staff strength, upgradation of office facilities including computerisation, review of systems and procedures in order to reduce delays, regular inspections of passport offices and follow up action.

[English]

INDIAN WORKERS ABROAD

1885. Dr. Vasant Niwruuti Pawar : Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state :