

Leasing out Tin Bigha to Bangladesh

3675. SHRI CHITTA BASU: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 5157 dated 26-3-1981 regarding Indo-Bangladesh land boundary demarcation and state:

(a) whether the agreement has since been ratified by the Parliament;

(b) whether the details of the lease terms have since been finally worked out;

(c) if so, the details of the terms; and

(d) whether the lease in perpetuity by India to Bangladesh of an area near "Tin Bigha" is not virtually a transfer of a part of Indian territory to any foreign state?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): (a) The Land Boundary Agreement between India and Bangladesh signed on 16 May, 1974 has not yet been ratified by our Parliament.

(b) and (c). The terms of the lease-in-perpetuity are still under negotiation with the Bangladesh Government.

(d) Under the terms of the Agreement, lease-in-perpetuity of an area near Tin Bigha in the Cooch Behar District of West Bengal to connect Dahagram with Panbari Mouza (P. S. Patgram) of Bangladesh does not amount to transfer of Indian territory to Bangladesh. Sovereignty over the leased area will continue to vest in India. Moreover, the lease terms proposed by Government of India adequately protect free passage of Indian citizens and their goods across the area to be leased. There is thus no question of any transfer of a part of Indian territory.

Increased surcharged on coal, salt and cement carried through coastal

3676. SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV:

SHRI B. V. DESAI:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the surcharge on coal, salt and cement carried through coastal shipping vessels has been increased;

(b) the reason for the extra levy; and

(c) what would be its effect on the consumers of these commodities?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The surcharge has been increased on account of the increase in bunker prices.

(c) The increase in bunker surcharge is likely to have only a marginal effect on the prices of these commodities.

Railway lines for Backward Areas

3677. SHRI RANJIT SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Railway Department had decided to connect by railway line the backward areas of the country;

(b) if so, whether he had given an assurance in the last Session to start railway lines connecting backward areas like Palanur, Hajaribagh via Sherghapi, Himanganj and Gaya in Bihar; and

(c) whether survey work for the new lines has actually started and if not, the reasons therefor?