

(c) whether Government have any proposal to divert cargo from the ports which are suffering from congestion;

(d) whether there is any proposal to improve upon the existing arrangement to accommodate big ships of 1 lakh tons and more in Paradip Port to increase cargo handling; and

(e) if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) to (b) The quantum of traffic at Paradip Port has been falling during the last three years. This has been due to fall in iron ore exports.

To meet the situation, the Port is making efforts to attract more of import and export cargo to the port. Efforts are also made to allot cargo handled by Government agencies to Paradip Port to the extent feasible. Besides, MMTC is trying to find new markets for export of iron ore.

(c) Diversion of cargo from one port to another is not easy or always possible, since the port of call by the vessel is decided by the consignee/steamer agent, depending upon their requirements. To utilise the facilities available at the major ports in the country, the Ministry allots cargo handled by Govt. agencies among different ports after taking into account various factors.

(d) No.

(e) Does not arise.

Anti-India Propaganda in Gulf Countries

888. SHRI BRAJAMOHAN MOHANTY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether anti-Indian propaganda by Pakistan and Jewish Agencies in Gulf countries had been brought to the notice of the Government;

(b) if so, have the Government taken up the matter with concerned authorities and concerned Governments and if so, what is their reaction in details; and

(c) what positive steps Government have taken to successfully counteract such mischievous propaganda?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI A. A. RAHIM): (a) Yes, Sir. Government is aware of propaganda carried out by Pakistan and some Jewish Agencies especially misrepresenting the Assam incidents.

(b) and (c) Government have taken up the matter through diplomatic channels and through personal contacts at high levels with the Governments of the concerned countries as well with representatives of their media. Every effort was made to present the unfortunate events in Assam in the right perspective and as a result there is now better understanding of the same.

Survey for blind in the Country

889. SHRI BHUBANESWAR BHUYAN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of India have conducted any survey of blind persons in the country with particular reference to Assam; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken to reduce/eradicate blindness in the country with particular reference to Assam?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI): (a) During 1971-72, the Indian Council of Medical Research had supported a survey carried out at the Department of Ophthalmology Assam Medical College, Dibrugarh.

The Council has now initiated a study to evolve a national strategy for the control of cataract in collaboration with the National Programme for Control of Blindness. In Phase I of the study, an estimate of the prevalence of cataract in different parts of the country is being made, wherein Nowgong District in Assam has been selected as one of the 19 Centres.

(b) The study carried out at Dibrugarh during 1971-72 was mainly a prevalence study to estimate the prevalence of corneal blindness. The study estimated that the prevalence was 1.74 per cent in the population.

The Government of India have launched a National Programme for Control of Blindness in the country to tackle the problem of visual impairment and blindness. Under the Programme in the State of Assam, two Mobile Units have been established at Gauhati and Dibrugarh, 85 Primary Health Centres, 10 District Hospitals and two Medical Colleges have been upgraded to provide adequate eye care services. Two training schools have started functioning at Gauhati and Dibrugarh to train candidates for Ophthalmic Assistants to meet the manpower requirements at PHCs and Distt. Hospitals etc.

Indo-Pak Joint Commission

890. SHRI AHMED M. PATEL:
SHRI F.H. MOHSIN:
SHRI UTTAM RATHOD:
SHRI K. MALLANNA:
SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIG-
RAHI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indo-Pak Joint Commission held meeting in Islamabad recently;

(b) if so, the details of subjects discussed;

(c) the final agreement made in regard to trade, tourism and other important issues; and

(d) what steps are being taken to implement these?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI A. A. RAHIM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Discussions took place on economic matters including industry, Agriculture, railways, shipping, telecommunication, postal service, health, scientific and technical cooperation, trade, information, education, social sciences, culture, sports, travel, tourism and consular.

(c) A copy of the Report of the first meeting of the Indo-Pak Joint Commission held in Islamabad and visit of the Minister for External Affairs to Pakistan from June 1 to 4 is placed on the Table of the House.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT—6757/83]

In his address to the concluding session of the Joint Commission Foreign Minister had described the progress of the inaugural session of the Joint Commission as "modest but useful".

(d) Necessary measures are being taken by the different departments/Ministries of the Government of India to implement the decisions taken. This will be further discussed by the four Sub-Commissions which will meet again before the end of the year.

Recently Framed Child Welfare Scheme

891. SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Government have recently framed any Child Welfare Scheme and introduced it in various States;

(b) if so, the details regarding the allocation of amount sanctioned in favour of Orissa; and