

(f) and (g) An indent for 450 doctors, which includes the requirements of the South Eastern Railway, has already been placed on the Union Public Service Commission. For meeting immediate need of doctors, Zonal Railways have been authorised to fill the vacancies by *ad hoc* appointments.

Bridges Pending Completion Beyond Their Scheduled Time

2619. SHRI N. DENNIS : Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state the number of bridges in the country which are pending completion beyond their scheduled time ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI Z.R. ANSARI) : At present there are 24 Major Bridges and 31 Minor Bridges on National Highways which are pending for completion beyond their scheduled time.

Separate Metre Gauge Zone

2620. SHRI BHEEKHABHAI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the proposal for making a separate metre gauge zone has been finalised; and

(b) if not, how much time will it take to finalise this proposal ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI A.B.A. GANI KHAN CHAUDHURI) : (a) and (b) The entire question of reorganisation of railways, creation of zones including separate metre gauge zone is currently under consideration of the Railway Reforms Committee. Further action in the matter, if any, can be taken by this Ministry only on receipt of the recommendations of the said Committee.

P&T Telephone Connections at Bhokar, Umri, Chondi, Basmat, Both Road and Islampur Stations

2621. SHRI UTTAM RATHOD : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Bhokar, Umri, Chondi, Basmat, Both Road, Islampur railway stations under South Central Railway have not been provided with P&T telephone connections inspite of public demand; and

(b) if so, what action Government propose to take in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS : (SHRI A.B.A. GANI KHAN CHAUDHURI) : (a) and (b) Representations have been received from public and Members of Parliament for installation of P&T telephone at Bhokar and Umri Stations only. Basmat station is already provided with a P&T telephone. Action has already been taken to provide P&T telephone at Bhokar and Umri Stations. Since a P&T telephone Exchange has recently been installed at Both Road Station, action will be initiated to provide a telephone at this station also. Provision of P&T telephone at Chondi and Islampur (Sasharakund) Stations is not feasible, since there is no P&T exchange at these towns.

Alleged Smuggling by Indians in Nigeria

2622. SHRI CHIRANJI LAL SHARMA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that large number of Indians have been accused of smuggling in Nigeria;

(b) if so, whether facts have been ascertained; and

(c) reaction of Indian Government thereto ?