

Indian business houses ranging from provision stores to restaurants and Barber shops, have been hard hit by the Singapore Government's tough immigration policy ;

(b) whether it is also a fact that huge loss has been sustained to Indian business establishments because of the Government's refusal to extend their work permit ; and

(c) if so, the details in this regard and the reaction of Indian Government thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) In August, 1981, the Singapore Prime Minister announced his Government's decision not to renew work permits of workers from non-traditional sources, a category which includes India. However, this decision was not made applicable to shipyard, construction and domestic workers. On December 31, 1981, Singapore Prime Minister further announced that with the exceptions noted above, the issue of work permits to workers from non-traditional sources would stop in 1982. These work permits would not be valid beyond 1984. On November 2, 1983 however the Singapore Government announced that it proposed to allow some companies to retain either upto 50% of the Workers they are already employing from non-traditional sources or upto a number equivalent to 5% of their total work force.

As a consequence of the new immigration policy, several miscellaneous businesses which had relied on foreign workers including provision stores, restaurants, etc. have been adversely affected as regards profitability. Any decision regarding whom to allow to work in Singapore naturally is an internal matter for the Government of Singapore. It may be noted that the decision in question applies to all foreigners and not to Indians only. The Government of India are, however mindful of the interests of Indian nationals abroad and have been keeping this question under view, so that an appropriate approach may be made as and when due.

Opening of Srinagar-Rawalpindi and Jammu-Syalokot Roads.

3864. SHRI ABDUL RASHID KABULI : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to have discussion with Pakistan to open Srinagar-Rawalpindi and Jammu-Syalokot roads for people of both sides visiting their relations on legally sound documents as has been done in the case of Wagha border (Amritsar-Lahore railway line) in order to facilitate their travel, as also strengthen the cultural and trade ties between the two countries ; and

(b) whether such a proposal was discussed with Pakistan at any stage and level ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. The Indo-Pak Visa Agreement of September 14, 1974 provided for opening of two checkpoints i. e., Wagah/Attari and Khokrapar/Munabao on the land border for entry/exit of nationals of either country going to/coming from the other country. However, so far only the Wagah/Attari checkpoint has been functioning.

Government have on different occasions, both verbally and in writing requested the Government of Pakistan to reopen the Khokrapar-Munabao checkpoints. However, Government of Pakistan have declined to do so.

दिल्ली से कोटद्वार के बीच एक सीधी रेल गाड़ी सेवा आरम्भ करना

3865. श्री हरीश रावत : क्या रेल मन्त्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या सरकार आगामी ग्रीष्म ऋतु में दिल्ली से कोटद्वार सीधी रेल सेवा आरम्भ करने हेतु किसी प्रस्ताव पर विचार कर रही है ;

(ख) यदि हां, तो यह रेल सेवा कब तक आरम्भ की जायेगी ;

(ग) यदि नहीं, तो उसके क्या कारण हैं ; और