

State has a vast area with a population of more than 4 crores. The development of railway line there is quite disproportionate to the area. It has a total of only 300 kms. railway line. Karnataka is split among 3 railway zones, namely, Southern Railway (HQ at Madras), South Central Railway (HQ Secunderabad) and Central Railway (HQ Bombay) resulting in total neglect of railway development activities in the State. The State has only 60 kms. of broad gauge double line, but there is no trace of triple or quadruple lines either in broad gauge or metre gauge as in other States like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

Railway Reforms Committee had recommended the creation of the South Western Railway (SWR) Zone for Karnataka with Headquarters at Bangalore, constituting Bangalore, Mysore, Hubli and Sholapur Divisions. The Railway Ministry had agreed to this in principle and in fact, while laying the foundation stone for the divisional office at Bangalore, the future requirements of housing the railway zone office was kept in view and 9-storeyed building had been planned. Owing to certain tragic events which took place in 1984, this proposal is still hanging fire in the National Planning Commission. Karnataka satisfies all the parameters required for setting up of a railway zone as recommended by the Railway Reforms Committee.

I, therefore, request the hon. Minister to set up South Western Railway Zone for Karnataka with its Headquarters at Bangalore at the earliest.

**(viii) Need to construct Rehabilitation Centre for the leprosy cured at Koratty Leprosy Hospital in Trichur district, Kerala**

PROF. SAVITHRI LAKSHMANAN (Mukundapuram): Koratty Leprosy Hospital, Trichur District, Kerala is one of the oldest hospitals in the State. A proposal for open-

ing of a Rehabilitation Centre there was in the process and even foundation stone thereof was laid a few years back.

The patients from the Hospital after treatment are not accepted by the society. The proposed rehabilitation centre is the only place where the cured leprosy patients can work and live.

At present 25 wards in this Leprosy Hospital are occupied by nearly 800 patients. Out of this, about 4 wards are filled with those patients who are totally immobile. The conditions of these leprosy patients are very pathetic and they run from pillar to post for maintaining their livelihood.

As a representative of the Koratty, I urge upon the Government to take immediate steps to issue necessary directions to start the long pending construction work and rehabilitate the patients who are totally cured from the Leprosy in the rehabilitation centre.

14.38 hrs.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

**Position of Indians in Kuwait**

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI HARI KISHORE SINGH): I wish to revert once again to a matter which has caused deep concern to all of us in this House, that is, the condition of our nationals in Kuwait. On August 2 itself, the day the Iraqi troops entered Kuwait, we issued instructions to our Ambassador in Kuwait to take all possible measures for the safety and security of our nationals. He was specifically instructed to devise a suitable mechanism to keep in touch with our community, especially so in view of the large numbers involved. As the House is aware, we have about 172,000 of our nationals in Kuwait. Simultaneously, our Ambassador in Baghdad