

large number of casualties. Since publication of incorrect news regarding accidents due to lack of adequate information is apt to create unnecessary fear and apprehension in the mind of the public, Railways were advised to maintain closer liaison with the Press to prevent the changes of distortion of facts and unnecessary apprehension and misgivings being created in the mind of the travelling public.

Pak President's offer of No-War-Pact

*62. SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES :
SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether President Zia Ul Haq of Pakistan has made the offer of No-War-Pact with India ; and

(b) if so, the Government's reaction thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO) : (a) On September 15, 1981, while announcing the formal acceptance by Pakistan of the US package proposal of supply and sale of arms to Pakistan the official spokesman of the Pakistan Government, in the concluding portion of his statement, suggested Pakistan's readiness "to enter into immediate consultations with India for the purpose of exchanging mutual guarantees of non-aggression and non-use of force in the spirit of the Simla Agreement". A little over two months later, on 22nd November, 1981, the Pakistan Government confirmed this in official notes communicated to us in Delhi and Islamabad.

(b) Our attitude in this regard will be positive on the basis that

Pakistan's "offer" constitutes an acceptance of India's offer of a No-war-Pact which dates back to 1949 and in amplification of the Simla Agreement. A detailed statement on this matter has been made in both Houses of Parliament on 25th November, 1981.

Literacy in Bihar

*65. SHRI VIJAY KUMAR YADAV : Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the literacy percentage in Bihar has increased by only 6.1 per cent between 1971 and 1981 against national average of 34 per cent ;

(b) if so, the details and reasons therefor ; and

(c) whether it is proposed to take any extra measures to improve the literacy rates of such backward states and if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRIES OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE : (SHRIMATI SHEELA KAUL) : (a) and (b). The literacy percentage in Bihar rose by 30 per cent over the base level of 19.94 per cent in 1971 to 26.01 per cent in 1981. For the country as a whole, the literacy percentage rose by 21.1 per cent from the base level of 29.45 in 1971 to 36.17 in 1981. While Bihar started from a lower literacy percentage level compared to the country as a whole, it has been increasing its literacy percentage at a faster pace than the country as a whole.

(c) Yes sir. Assistance is being given to Bihar and other eight educationally backward States both under Adult Education and Non-Formal Education Scheme.