

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) The modernisation and upgradation of the equipment and weaponry of the Armed Forces is an on going process.

(b) and (c). This year as well, as in previous years, an exercise was undertaken to determine the priorities for modernisation and the funds required. For this purpose, the changing threat scenario, advancement of technology, global and regional security environment as also the resources available are taken into account. These were duly projected to the Ministry of Finance to enable it to allocate funds keeping in view the available resources, the demands of different sectors of the economy, as well as the projected security concerns. It will not be in the national security interest to divulge the details of the modernisation and upgradation plans.

Foreign Participation in University Education

3822. DR. RAM CHANDRA DOME: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the U.G.C. Chairperson recently has made a statement regarding foreign participation in University education;

(b) if so, whether this was done after consultation with the academic community;

(c) whether the Government are taking any measures to resolve the resource crunch in the U.G.C.; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) and (b). According to the information furnished by University Grants Commission (UGC), the Chairperson, UGC, while inaugurating the Round Table on 'University Management' for Vice-Chancellors at Himachal Pradesh University on 13.6.96, made a general statement/observation that in wake of liberalisation process, the Indian University system is likely to face competition from foreign universities who would be coming forward to offer their programmes to the Indian students. This observation was intended to forewarn the VCs to gear up for the impending challenge.

(c) and (d). Plan and Non-Plan grants provided by the Government to UGC have been steadily increasing over the years. An outlay of Rs. 612.38 crore has been allocated to UGC for the 8th Plan as against a sum of Rs. 576.01 crore provided in the 7th Plan.

Declaration of National Highways

3823. SHRI DILEEP SANGHANI:
SHRI DINSHA PATEL:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to declare State roads as National Highways in Gujarat;

(b) if so, the details with locations thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether Government of Gujarat has sent any proposals for declaring new National Highways in the State; and

(e) if so, the current status of these proposals?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) to (e). Even though proposals to declare some State roads in Gujarat as National Highways have been received, it has not been possible to do so due to paucity of funds.

Strengthening of National Highways

3824. SHRI SUDHIR GIRI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the National Highways proposed to be strengthened in the country in the current financial year, State and U.T. wise;

(b) the total expenditure proposed to be incurred for this purpose; and

(c) the criteria of selecting the National Highways in the current year?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) A statement is annexed.

(b) A total of 346 km of National Highways at a cost of Rs. 101.90 crore is proposed to be strengthened, as per Annual Plan 1996-97.

(c) Stretches for strengthening are selected from qualifying kilometers based on their condition, traffic intensity, inter-se-priority and availability of funds.