

Bridge Connecting Willingdon Island with Ernakulam and Mattanchery

3501. SHRI M. M. LAWRENCE:
Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the present bridges connecting Willingdon Island with Ernakulam and Mattanchery have outlived their life;

(b) whether these bridges were originally meant only to carry much lighter loads than now;

(c) whether it is also a fact that both the life of the bridges and the heavy traffic on them endangered the bridges; and

(d) what steps Government propose to take to meet the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) to (d). Yes, Sir. According to the information received from the State Government, these bridges are being maintained by the Cochin Port Trust. The Port Trust have decided to repair these bridges at an estimated cost of Rs. 19.60 lacs and the Government of Kerala have already sanctioned their share involved. These repairs would be substantial enough for these bridges to last for another 20 years. In addition, it is also proposed to construct a new link road connecting Willingdon Island directly with National Highway No. 47 bypass at Cochin towards near about middle or so of the bypass which will help cater for traffic in the directions of both North and South of Cochin.

Western Powers Move to Scuttle U.N. Meet on Indian Ocean

3502. SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA:
Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether certain Western Powers have raised the question of

abandoning the proposed U.N. conference on the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace, scheduled to be held in Sri Lanka in 1981;

(b) whether these powers have made such a proposal in the Political Committee of the United Nations, if so, on what grounds; and

(c) Government of India's reaction in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): (a) and (b). The resolution drafted by the U. N. Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, which was endorsed by the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly reiterates the provision for the 1981 Conference and urges the Ad Hoc Committee "to make every effort in consideration of the political and security climate of the Indian Ocean area, particularly recent developments", to finalise the preparations for the Conference. While there has been no specific proposal not to convene the Conference in 1981 in Sri Lanka, a number of Western delegations have expressed the view that in view of recent developments in the Indian Ocean area, it would not be feasible to hold the Conference as scheduled.

(c) Speaking in the First Committee of the U. N. General Assembly on November 18, 1980, the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations while referring to the reluctance of several delegations to commit themselves unequivocally to the convening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean, to be held in Sri Lanka in 1981, reiterated India's position that the Conference should be convened as scheduled in order to implement the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. He categorically rejected any preconditions, unrelated to the implementation of the Declaration, for the convening of the Conference.