

12.20 hrs.

STATEMENT RE : COLLAPSE OF TWO SPANS OF BRIDGE ON RIVER MANDОВI NEAR PANAJI, GOA

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): Mr. Speaker, Sir, with heavy heart, I regret to inform the hon. Members of the House that two spans of bridge across Mandovi river...
(Interruptions.)

SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK (Panaji) : Sir, this bridge on Mandovi river is named after Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. So, it should be corrected. It is the Nehru Bridge.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : With heavy heart, I regret to inform the Hon'ble Members of the House that two spans of bridge across Mandovi river on N.H. 17 near Panaji, Goa have collapsed at about 8.20 hrs. on the 5th July, 1986. As reported by the Government of Goa, Daman and Diu this accident had unfortunately resulted in loss of two lives and injury to one person. One person is also reported to be missing. The injured person later on died in the hospital. This was one of the first bridges of cantilever type constructed in our country and commissioned to traffic in 1970.

The bridge is located in marine environment. When damages to parts of the superstructure were reported by Goa Government in September, 1985, the problem of corrosion was noticed. Load restrictions of 20 Tons and speed restriction of 25 km. per hour were imposed on all vehicles using the bridge. As a matter of fact, a high level Technical Committee had been constituted by the Government of Goa on 1st October, 1985 on the request of Government of India to ascertain the causes of distress, to suggest remedial measures and to advise whether it is possible to minimise the rate of further deterioration of the bridge till the final

remedial measures are implemented. The Committee had observed that loss of prestress had occurred in many prestressing cables of the superstructure due to corrosion and had been examining various types of remedial measures based on detailed testing and investigations. On the basis of their interim recommendations, the Government had sanctioned in May 1986 an estimate amounting to Rs. 27.5 lakhs for repair on experimental basis of three spans identified as the most distressed ones.

Government of Goa have already filed an FIR under Section 304-A of IPC. They have also announced holding of a judicial enquiry. The Ministry has decided to constitute a Body of Experts to examine the feasibility of rehabilitating the existing bridge.

We are fully aware of the inconvenience being caused to the travelling public because of distribution of traffic and arrangements for ferry have already been made which is proposed to be further augmented to mitigate the hardship to the public. The Goa Government is in touch with Army Authorities to explore the construction of a Pontoon bridge. Through traffic is being diverted via Ponda involving a detour of about 45 kms. We propose to keep the diverted route in traffic-worthy condition till a new bridge is constructed.

I am to inform the House that in view of the increasing volume of traffic passing over the existing bridge the Ministry had already made a provision for construction of a new bridge in the Seventh Five-Year Plan and an estimate for its survey and investigations has already been sanctioned on the 31st March, 1986. In view of the collapse of the bridge, emergent steps are being taken to expedite construction of a new bridge.

SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK : There should be discussion on this issue because all our public projects are in danger, because of no quality control and no arrest has been made for criminal negligence. Why was no one arrested so far ?