

1	2	3
	3. Expansion of Jetty at Arasalar River, Karaikal	6.00
	4. Yoga Festival	1.47

(c) The Ministry of Tourism and Culture has decided to prepare a comprehensive Master Plan for the improvement and upkeep of the old monuments at Arikamedu at Pondicherry.

Interest rate on EPF

*26. SHRI JIBON ROY : Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Ministry of Finance is pressurising Ministry of Labour to cut down interest rate on EPF;

(b) whether Government are aware that EPF Board asserted that they are earning sufficiently to pay interests at prevailing rate; and

(c) if so, the reasons behind imposing cut in interest rates on EPF?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) : (a) No, Sir. However, Ministry of Finance has advised the Ministry of Labour to fix interest rate on EPF accumulation for the year 2002-2003 at the rate of 9%.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The advice of the Ministry of Finance to fix interest rate on EPF accumulation for the year 2002-2003 at the rate of 9% is based on considerations of prudent asset-liability management, absence of risk capital reserve, anticipated decline in the income of Employees Provident Fund Organization in a soft interest rate regime and recommendation of an Expert Committee to benchmark the interest rate on EPF to average secondary market yield on Government Securities.

Purchase of Turbo-prop Aircrafts by LA.

*27. SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to purchase turbo-prop aircraft for the Indian Airlines for short haul routes on account of fuel economy and shorter runways in the North-East and North Indian Hilly regions; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) and (b) The proposal of Indian Airlines for purchase of six 50 seater ATR 42-500 aircraft was considered by the Government in June, 1999. However, the proposal was not found viable. Therefore, the Government advised Indian Airlines to explore the possibility of acquiring these aircraft on lease basis. Currently, Indian Airlines is in the process of finalising drylease of ATR-42-320 aircraft.

Survey on water scarcity

*28. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that water expert from Maharashtra has conducted field survey in 12 States to prepare a basic treatise on land and water resources development strategy;

(b) if so, whether it has been found in the survey that 300 million people are at present severely affected by water scarcity in the country;

(c) whether in many parched areas of a number of States, situation is very threatening; and

(d) if so, the steps being taken to consider the recommendations made in the report?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI): (a) to (d) The Government is not aware of any such survey conducted by a water expert from Maharashtra. However, as per the latest assessment (1993) of the water resources of the country made by Central Water Commission (CWC) and the population assessed in the 2001. Census, the average annual per capita water availability in the basins namely, Area of Inland Drainage in Rajasthan Desert; Sabarmati; East Flowing Rivers between Mahanadi and Kanyakumari; Pennar; West Flowing Rivers of Kutchh, Surashtra including Luni; Cauvery; Tapi and Mahi is less than 1000 cubic metre against the national average per capita water availability of 1820 cubic metre. According to the international criteria, a situation of annual per capita availability of water of less than 1000 cubic metre is considered as scarcity condition.