

biomass, increasing ground water recharge in addition to production of fuel and fodder for the local people.

Expenditure on Foreign Travel

2674. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the total expenditure on foreign travels undertaken by the officials of his Ministry in the last five years;

(b) the countries and the purpose of the visit; and

(c) whether any report(s) were submitted by them and action taken thereon; if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and the same will be laid on the Table of the House.

खजुराहो के लिए रेल लाइन

2675. श्री गोविन्द राम पिरौरी: क्या रेल मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि खजुराहो के लिए रेल सुविधा कब तक उपलब्ध करा दी जायेगी और इस संबंध में क्या कार्यवाही की जा रही है?

रेल मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री सतपाल महाराज): महोदय से खजुराहो तक रेल संपर्क की व्यवस्था के लिये सर्वेक्षण कार्य अभी पूरा हुआ है। क्षेत्रीय रेलवे के विचार-विमर्श से सर्वेक्षण के परिणामों की अंतिम रूप दिया जा रहा है। सर्वेक्षण के परिणामों को अंतिम रूप दिये जाने के बाद योजना आयोग के विचार-विमर्श से परियोजना पर आगे विचार किया जाएगा।

Poor Condition of Rail Coaches in Kerala

2676. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Railway coaches which are in use in

Kerala are very old and are not rail worthy;

(b) whether it is also a fact that many coaches taken for maintenance and repair are not returned to Trivandrum Division and the trains are running with reduced number of coaches; and

(c) if so, the steps taken to improve the conditions of the coaches?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) No, Sir. The coaches working in Kerala area are all within the useful economic life of a coach, comparatively younger in age and maintained in safe working condition.

(b) The coaches are sometimes detached and taken for maintenance attention. However, alternative coaches are provided and the trains in Trivandrum Division are running with proper composition.

(c) Does not arise.

Proposal to Declare Primary Education as a Fundamental Right

2677. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: DR. MAHESH CHANDRA SHARMA:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government have taken any concrete steps so far to make the right to free and compulsory elementary education a "Fundamental Right", as envisaged in their Common Minimum Programme;

(b) if so, what efforts/allocations were made in the current financial year to mobilise funds both at the Central and State levels; and

(c) whether Government have also gone into the legal aspect which may require amendment of the Constitution of India before declaring primary education as a "Fundamental Right"; 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) to (c) In pursuance of the Common Minimum Programme, State Education Ministers and State Education Secretaries discussed the proposal to make free and compulsory elementary education a Fundamental Right in a Conference held on 9-10 August, 1996. The Conference has recommended constitution of a committee under the Chairmanship of Union Minister of State for Education to consider the financial, administrative, legal and academic implications of the proposal.

The question of mobilising funds for this purpose would arise after the Committee has considered the financial implications of the proposal.

Steps to Control Air Pollution in Tamil Nadu

2678. SHRI R. MARGABANDU: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken by the Central Pollution Control Board to arrest air pollution caused by more than 50 industries in Sipcot, Ranipet in Tamil Nadu; and

(b) the reasons for not cancelling the licences of these industries despite the emission of noxious gases by them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) and (b) As per the provisions of Section 17 of the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, the action is required to be taken by the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board and not by the Central Pollution Control Board.

Restriction on Trade in Agricultural Commodities

2679. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that inspite of liberalisation policy in vogue there are many restrictions on domestic and foreign trade in agricultural commodities, including seeds which are against the interests of the farmers in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action Government propose to take to remove these restrictions?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There are quantitative restrictions on agricultural commodities for foreign trade and inter-zone and inter-state restrictions on the movement and storage of foodgrains in some States. These are no restrictions on domestic trade of seed for sowing and planting purposes. As regards foreign trade the import and export of seed is regulated in accordance with the provisions of EXIM Policy 1992-97 subject to the fulfilment of the provisions of New Policy on Seed Development, 1988 PFS Order, 1989 and Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and flora and taking into consideration the domestic requirements and the commercial interests of the country.

(c) In the regime of liberalisation, the trade policy review is a continuous process and the prime objective is to safeguard the interests of both farmers and consumers.

Production and Procurement of Paddy in Punjab

2680. SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH MANN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state: