

(b) if so, what are the details thereof stating the estimated cargo (with value) piled up at international airports and since when such cargo is lying there for clearance; and

(c) what is the present rate of clearing cargo and what measures have been taken by Government to provide necessary infrastructure to avoid accumulation of cargo at the international airports in the country?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ARIF MOHD. KHAN): (a) The problem of accumulation of cargo including garments during peak season is experienced mainly at I.G.I. Airport, Delhi.

(b) As on 19-3-90, the backlog of cargo at I.G.I. Delhi, Madras, Calcutta and Bombay Airports was 2685 tonnes, 147 tonnes, 111.2 tonnes and 55.3 tonnes respectively. No statistics is maintained by International Airports Authority of India about the value of the consignments.

(c) During the first fortnight of March, 1990, the average daily clearance rate of cargo at IGI, Delhi, Madras, Calcutta and Bombay Airports was 205 M.T., 60 M.T., 23 M.T., and 130 M.T. respectively. The Government have announced an 'Open Sky Policy' to enable scheduled and non-scheduled operators to lift cargo from India. Air-India has been advised to offer shuttle operations to Middle East by hiring additional capacity. Cargo Tariff rates have also been rationalised to make it economical for air transport operations. The infrastructural facilities for cargo handling have also been adequately improved at the international airports.

Vacant Posts of Doctors

1560. SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of vacant posts

of junior doctors in the dispensaries and hospitals run by the Central Government;

(b) what steps are being taken by Government to fill up these vacant posts;

(c) whether it is a fact that shortage of funds is the main impediment against filling up these posts; and

(d) whether Government would take steps to provide health facilities in all villages by setting up medical and health centres in every village and by appointing qualified doctors there?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI NILAMANI ROURAY): (a) The number of vacant posts of Junior Doctors in Central Government hospitals in Delhi is 105. Dispensaries have no posts of junior doctors.

(b) and (c) In view of the fact that the *ad-hoc* medical officers appointed during the strike of Junior doctors in May-June, 1989 have been allowed to be continued beyond their normal term of appointment in the light of the judgement of the Central Administrative Tribunal, the Government instructed the hospitals not to fill up the vacant posts of Junior Residents, for the time being to the extent of the availability of surplus *ad hoc* medical officers. As regards Senior Residents, the hospitals concerned have taken action to fill up the vacant posts.

(d) The responsibility for providing Medical and Health Services in rural areas is that of State Government.

Airport at Vagalkulam in Tamil Nadu

1561. SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) what is the stage and status of the proposal to construct an airport in Vagalkulam in Chidambaranar district of Tamil Nadu;

(b) what are the impediments in executing this proposal; and

(c) whether the airstrip used during World War II in Kayatar in the same district could be considered as an alternative site for this proposed airport?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ARIF MOHD. KHAN): (a) and (b) The construction of an airport at Vagaikulam in Chidambaranar District has commenced from the 16th of January, 1990.

(c) No, Sir.

Control of rabies

1562 SHRI SYED SIBTEY RAZI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that more than 30,000 people in the country die every year due to rabies;

(b) whether this can be attributed to the large number of stray dogs in the country;

(c) if so, what effective steps at national level are being taken to combat the menace;

(d) whether Government propose to administer anti-rabies vaccines free of cost to the people in the country as a preventive measure; and

(e) if the answer to part (d) above be in the negative, what alternative steps Government propose to take combat this menace?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI NILAMANI ROUTRAY): (a) and (b) Although no exact figures of the incidence of rabies are available, it is estimated that nearly 25,000 deaths occur in the country due to rabies every year out of which 96 per cent are due to dog bites including stray dogs.

(c) The Ministry of Agriculture has launched a National Canine Rabies Control Programme during VI Five Year Plan. Under this programme 30 rabies control units have been set up in different States to supplement the control activities undertaken by State Governments and local civic bodies.

(d) The anti rabies vaccine (nervous tissue vaccine) is provided free of cost in Government Hospitals.

(e) Does not arise.

Setting up of Ophthalmic Centres

1563. SHRI SYED SIBTEY RAZI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to effect improvement in the ophthalmic facilities at Dr. Rajendra Prasad Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences, New Delhi and raise it to the level of facilities available in SAARC countries;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and what is the amount likely to be spent thereon;

(c) whether there are some more ophthalmic centres in the country;

(d) if so, what are the Statewise details thereof;

(e) whether Government propose to set up ophthalmic centres in Uttar Pradesh also of the level of Dr. Rajendra Prasad Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences for the convenience of local patients; and

(f) if so, what are the details thereof and if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI NILAMANI ROUTRAY): (a) and (b) Dr. Rajendra Prasad Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences, New Delhi is a premier Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences at the National level. No information about the status of ophthalmic facilities available in SAARC countries is available with us. Under National Programme for Control of Blindness a sum of Rs. 3.57 crores had been provided to the Dr. Rajendra Prasad Centre for construction of building and also for the purchase of sophisticated ophthalmic equipments. Besides Rs. 12 lakhs is proposed to be given to Dr. R. P. Centre during 1989-90 for establishing a Central Ophthalmic Instrument repair workshop.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) To cater to the needs of the people of different zones, following Regional