

suggested the introduction of a "heritage train" to attract especially the foreign tourists to the State which has, amongst others, the world famous Taj Mahal, India's biggest draw, besides some world heritage sites and a large number of other centres of tourist interest;

(b) if so, the details of the proposals received and the present status of its consideration/implementation; and

(c) the details of proposals received/under consideration, if any, for introduction of such dedicated special trains in other States or between States to cover important tourists circuits in the country?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) There is a proposal for running a luxury tourist train in the Karnataka Sector. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been entered into between the Railways and Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC) in this regard. The design layout of the coaches for this train has been finalized. There is also a proposal for introducing a second Palace on Wheels in the Rajasthan Sector.

Promoting Bio-fertilizers

†*198. **SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:** Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether research has revealed that the production capacity of land is not reduced as a result of increasing the quantity of bio-fertilizers;

(b) if so, the steps being taken to promote it comprehensively and intensively; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR):

(a) Bio-fertilizers are eco-friendly organic fertilizers. There is no possibility of reduction of productivity of land due to increased use of bio-fertilizers.

(b) and (c) In order to promote bio-fertilizers in the country, the Government provided financial assistance of Rs. 20.00 lakh per unit for

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

setting up of bio-fertilizers production units under "National Project on Development and Use of Bio-fertilizers" during the IXth Plan and 2002-03. The scheme has been subsumed under a new Central Sector Scheme "National Project on Organic Farming" from October 2004. Under the new scheme credit linked back ended subsidy is provided for setting up bio-fertilizer production units @ 25% of the project cost up to a maximum of Rs. 20.00 lakh through National Bank for Agriculture & Rural Development (NABARD) and National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC).

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has developed efficient strains of microbes which improve soil either by way of fixing nitrogen or by mobilizing soil nutrients like phosphorous, zinc etc. under Network Project on Bio-fertilizers. In order to create awareness about the use of bio-fertilizers among the farmers, training and demonstrations are arranged from time to time through State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) and ICAR Institutes.

Enhancing procurement of wheat

†*199. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been less procurement of wheat by Government in the country than its requirement during the year 2005-06;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) whether it is also fact that the quantity of Government procurement of wheat could be enhanced by further increasing its purchase-price;

(d) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(e) the reasons for not taking measures by Government in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) The procurement of wheat for crop year 2005-06 (to be marketed in Rabi marketing Season

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