

All India permits for tourist vehicles

*654. SHRI KHURSHED ALAM
SHRI IBRAHIM KALANIYA:
SHRI QASIM ALI ABID:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have not yet finalised the matter regarding issuing of all India permits for tourist vehicles; and

(b) if so, by when Government propose to finalise the matter?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI KAMLAPATI TRIPATHI): (a) and (b). The action required to be taken by the Central Government preparatory to the implementation of the scheme for all India operation of a limited number of tourist vehicles of each State, on the basis of single-point taxation, has already been completed. The introduction of the scheme has, however, been held up mainly because several State Governments have not agreed to exempt tourist motor vehicles from passenger tax and road tax for operation in their respective territories. The matter is being pursued with the concerned States. Since taxation on road transport is within the purview of the States, it is not possible to indicate the date by which the scheme will be implemented.

Indian Air Force

*655. SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA:
SHRI S. G. SARDESAI:
SHRI RABI RAY:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Air Force is facing great difficulty to equip itself properly due to foreign exchange shortage; and

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken to resolve this crisis?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SARDAR SWARAN SINGH) (a) and (b). It would not be correct to refer to the situation as a crisis.

The difficulties of foreign exchange are well known and they are not peculiar to our country only. The need for further strengthening the Indian Air Force is also a continuing one. Our effort always has been to keep up for defence preparedness at a satisfactory level within our permissible resources.

Czechoslovak Prime Minister's visit to India

*656. SHRI YOGENDRA SHARMA:
Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia recently visited India; and

(b) if so, what was the nature of the discussions held with him; and what is its outcome?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI BIPINPAL DAS) (a) Yes, Sir. The Prime Minister of Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, H. E. Dr. Lubomir Strougal, paid an official visit to India from December 2 to 8, 1974, at the invitation of our Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi.

(b) The talks between the two Prime Ministers covered bilateral and international issues of mutual interest and revealed closeness or identity of views.

(c) A copy of the Indo-Czechoslovak Joint Communiqué of December 4, 1974, is placed on the Table of the House [See Appendix XC. Annexure No. 79].