

Nicobar and neighbouring islands the achievements of India after freedom in the various fields of national life and for publicising the various steps being taken to improve the living conditions of the people of the above region in all spheres?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI K. K. SHAH): Publicity in the Andaman and Nicobar islands on India's achievements in various fields of national life are carried out through various media like Field Publicity Unit, Information Centres, community listening sets, etc. The local station of the All India Radio at Port Blair also relays important programmes and speeches from the mainland. Block agencies in Panchayats and Social and Cultural Organisations also publicise the country's achievements. The Administration brings out a daily newspaper called the 'Daily Telegram' which publishes suitable articles besides news and comment on current affairs.

DEFENCE AND POLICE FORCES IN THE ANDAMANS

398. SHRI JAIRAMDAS DAULATRAM: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the proposals which are under Government's consideration for increasing the amenities and meeting the requirements of the defence and police forces stationed in the Andaman Nicobar and neighbouring islands; and

(b) by when Government will come to a decision on these proposals and what will be the time target for their implementation?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI M. R. KRISHNA): (a) and (b). A proposal for increasing the rate of Andaman Allowance in respect of the Defence Forces personnel stationed in the Andaman Nicobar group of islands is under consideration. A decision will be taken as early as possible. No proposal for the Police Forces is under consideration.

CONGRESS M. P.'S DELEGATION TO AFRICA

399. SHRI A. D. MANI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a delegation of four Congress M.P.'s. left for Africa in January, 1968 on a goodwill mission;

(b) if so, who sponsored the trip; and

(c) the reasons for which no Member belonging to opposition party was invited to join the delegation?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI-MATI INDIRA GANDHI): (a) A group of four Members of Parliament, namely, Shri Narendrasingh Mahida (Convenor), Shri Prasan Vadan Mehta (Member), Shri C. M. Kedaria (Member) and Sardar Santokh Singh (Member), undertook a tour of some East African countries in January 1968.

(b) and (c). As the trip was undertaken by the Members themselves, the question of inviting others did not arise.

NAVAL BASE AT PORT BLAIR

400. SHRI A. D. MANI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a small naval base is being set up in Port Blair and the Andamans; and

(b) what is the expected cost of the project?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SARDAR SWARAN SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It will not be in the public interest to disclose the cost.

MISS REITA FARIA'S RETURN TO INDIA

401. SHRI A. D. MANI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Miss Reita Faria, former Miss World, has applied for permission to return to India; and

(b) on whose visa she was travelling round the world as Miss World?