

rural people about air pollution which *inter-alia* includes a programme titled, 'Paryavaran Darslian' telecast during June, 2010- July, 2012 at a cost of Rs.16.30 crores (approx.) at DD National and 18 regional centres of Doordarshan in 12 vernacular languages to create mass awareness in urban and rural areas. The programme was coordinated by the CPCB. Environment has been included as a subject as part of curriculum at school level for students.

#### **Roads/stretchers to be declared as NHs in Andhra Pradesh**

\*324. SHRI DEVENDER GOUD T.: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government of Andhra Pradesh has submitted proposals to declare 48 roads/stretchers for declaring them as National Highways in the last three years and the current year; and

(b) if so, the action taken by the Ministry on the same?

THE MINISTER OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) As a part of Government Mandate to declare 10000 Kms of routes/road stretches as new National Highways, keeping in view the requirement of connectivity, *inter-se* priority and availability of funds, the Ministry has already declared 10000 Kms of roads/routes as new National Highways. Out of the above, about 1817 Kms are in the State of Andhra Pradesh.

#### **Misbehaviour with Indian diplomat in America**

†\*325. SHRI THAAWAR CHAND GEHLOT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has taken cognizance of the incident of misbehaviour with an Indian woman diplomat by the United States of America;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the details of the action taken by Government in protest of this incident;

(c) whether it is also a fact that there have been such incidents of misbehaviour with Indian diplomats, politicians and other eminent people in the United States of America earlier also, if so, the details thereof; and

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) the steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHID): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. On 12 December, 2013, Dr. Devyani Khobragade, Acting Consul General of India in New York, was arrested by officers of the Diplomatic Security Service of the US State Department on charges of 'visa fraud' and 'false statement.' Dr. Khobragade was subsequently taken to court where she was handcuffed, strip-searched, fingerprinted by U.S. law enforcement authorities, who claimed it was part of their normal procedures, and was later released by a US Court on bail. Since Government and the officer refused to accept guilt for these charges, Government was able to ensure that the US granted Dr. Khobragade full diplomatic immunity so that she could return to India on January 10, 2014.

The Government forcefully raised this issue with the U.S. Government and conveyed its strong objection to both the arrest of Dr. Khobragade and the manner in which action was taken. The U.S. Government expressed regret at this incident. Since Government also took the decision to transfer Dr. Khobragade to the Indian Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York, to safeguard her from further legal issues in the U.S., the U.S. side eventually provided her full diplomatic immunity, enabling her to leave the country, although the case remained in court.

The two countries have since agreed to initiate an official dialogue to comprehensively address all aspects related to the case against Dr. Khobragade, including India's demand for dropping of all charges, and all issues arising from differing perspectives on diplomatic privileges and immunities.

(c) There have been previous instances of Indian diplomats, political leaders, and other eminent people being subjected to enhanced security screening at airports in the US. These include Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, former President [John F. Kennedy International airport, New York; September, 2011]; Shri Praful Patel, Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises [Chicago O'Hare airport; September, 2010 and June, 2013]; Shri Mohammed Azam Khan, Minister of Urban Development and Parliament Affairs, Government of UP [Logan International Airport, Boston; April, 2013]; Smt. Meera Shankar, then Ambassador to USA [Chicago O'Hare airport -September, 2010; Jackson-Evers airport, Mississippi - December, 2010]; Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, then PR to the U.N. [Austin airport, Texas; November, 2010]; and Shri Shah Rukh Khan, Actor [White Plains airport, New York; April, 2012].

(d) The Government has consistently expressed its displeasure to the United States Government over such incidents. It has urged the U.S. Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security to ensure prevention of such occurrences in future. The Government has also conveyed that while it respects the rights of each country to institute necessary security procedures at their airports, internationally recognized diplomatic courtesies and privileges, as also religious and cultural sensitivities, must be respected. The U.S. Government has expressed regret for several of these incidents and conveyed that it would look at ways to prevent such incidents.

#### **Expansion and modernization programme of SAIL**

\*326. SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

- (a) the total projected investment to be made by the Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL) in the current expansion and modernization programme;
- (b) the likely share for the special and alloy steel plants; and
- (c) whether there is any long term plan to increase SAIL's presence and market share in special and alloy steel market?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA): (a) The projected investment to be made by Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) in the current phase of Modernization and Expansion Plan of its steel plants including mines is Rs.72,134 crore.

- (b) The likely share for the special and alloy steel plants is Rs.1902 crore.

(c) Currently, the special and alloy steel market is in a depressed state on account of weak demand from Auto and Engineering segments. The emphasis, therefore, is on devising plans for improving SAIL's presence and market share in the special steel and alloy market through strategies to reduce cost of production through reducing input costs, increasing order availability, liquidation of old stocks and sale of idle assets etc.

#### **Upgradation of facilities of PSKS in Tamil Nadu**

\*327. DR. R. LAKSHMANAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state: