

Fund were released to State Government of Tamil Nadu prior to last three years. Coastal security is reviewed periodically with all stakeholders by National Committee for Strengthening Maritime and Coastal Security (NCSMCS) against threats from the Sea and Steering Committee for Review of Coastal Security. The last meetings of the NCSMCS and the Steering Committee were held on 24.11.2016 and 07.02.2017, respectively.

#### **Children working in illegal mica mines**

\*242. SHRI V. VIJAYASAI REDDY: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that children as small as five years old are being engaged to work in illegal mica mines in States of Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar, etc.;

(b) whether it has also come to the notice of Government that as per Thomson Reuters Foundation investigation report, seven children were killed in two months of this year, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what steps Government is taking and how it is supplementing the efforts of the concerned State Government to stop illegal mining of mica and protect small children?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BANDARU DATTATREYA): (a) No such cases were reported to the Ministry.

(b) Ministry is aware about the media report in August, 2016 citing the Investigation Report of Thomson Reuters Foundation. This matter was inquired into by Directorate General of Mines Safety in Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and Jharkhand and as per the investigation report no such death could be established.

(c) The Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 and the Mines Act, 1952 prohibit the employment of persons below 18 years of age in mines or part thereof. The Mines Act, 1952 and Rules and Regulations made thereunder are enforced by Central Government. In order to implement the provisions of the Mines Act regular inspection is conducted by Directorate General of Mines Safety as per statute to verify and check if persons below 18 years of age are employed in mines. Besides action is taken on complains made by State Governments, news paper agencies, NGOs and general public.

#### **Implementation of Swadesh Darshan scheme in Jharkhand**

\*243. DR. PRADEEP KUMAR BALMUCHU: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has implemented Swadesh Darshan Scheme in Jharkhand State, if so, the details thereof;

(b) the areas selected/identified under this Scheme in the State; and

(c) the funds allocated and released so far under this Scheme and the status of the projects taken up as on date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) to (c) Swadesh Darshan Scheme- Integrated Development of Theme-Based Tourist Circuits covers entire country including Jharkhand. The projects under this Scheme are identified for development in consultation with the State Governments/ UT Administrations and are sanctioned subject to availability of funds, submission of suitable detailed project reports, adherence to scheme guidelines and utilization of funds released earlier.

The Central Sanctioning and Monitoring Committee of Swadesh Darshan Scheme has cleared the project 'Development of Eco Circuit: Jamshedpur-Ranchi- Hazaribagh' in March, 2016 for sanction.

However, no funds have been allocated and released so far in absence of submission of final Detailed Project Report and mandatory forms by the State Government.

#### **Foreign tourist arrivals in 2017**

\*244. DR. KANWAR DEEP SINGH: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether foreign tourist arrivals have increased significantly in the year 2017, if so, the possible reasons therefor; and

(b) whether Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) visiting India are also being counted as foreign tourists now, if so, since when and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) Yes, Sir. The Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India has increased to 48.85 lakh in Jan-June, 2017 from 41.69 lakh in Jan-June, 2016, registering a growth of 17.2% in Jan-June, 2017 over the same period of 2016.

Government of India has taken various steps to boost tourism in the country, which *inter-alia* include the following:

- Extended the facility of e-Visa for the citizens of 162 countries.
- Campaigns in the international and domestic markets to promote the varied tourism products and destinations through an integrated marketing and promotional strategy.
- Launched 24x7 Toll Free Multi-Lingual Tourist Helpline 1800 11 1363 in 12 Languages.