

(c) whether Government is planning to organize such international crafts mela in various parts of the country, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) whether Government has any proposal to organize rural crafts melas to promote handicrafts in rural areas also, if so, the details thereof and the steps taken in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI): (a) and (b) The 34th Surajkund International Crafts Mela was organised by Haryana Tourism at Surajkund, District Faridabad *w.e.f* 01.02.2020 to 16.02.2020.

The Surajkund Mela provided direct marketing platform to 1500 artisans from all across the globe. Out of 1500 artisans, 1345 artisans from India and 155 artisans from abroad (including 31 from SAARC nations) participated.

(c) Yes Sir. The Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) organizes various International Marketing events like Indian Handicrafts and Gift Fair (IHG, Delhi, Home Expo, Delhi, Homedecor Gifts & Houseware (HGH) India, Mumbai, International Mega Trade Fair, Delhi, Hindtex, Varanasi, to promote Indian handicrafts.

(d) Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) organizes Gandhi Shilp Bazaar, Craft Bazaar & Exhibitions all over the country to promote handicrafts. The details of Domestic marketing and International Marketing events organized during last 3 years along with details of artisans benefitted is given below:-

Year	No. of Domestic and International Marketing events	No. of Artisans directly Benefitted
2016-2017	296	16321
2017-2018	259	17542
2018-2019	272	16420

#### **Air corridors with Central Asian nations**

\*197. SHRI S. MUTHUKARUPPAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India is considering to set up air corridors with five Central Asian nations;
- (b) whether the availability of air corridors is likely to boost trade in perishable goods, agricultural and food products;
- (c) whether the corridors shall include regular cargo flights with special clearing and customs facilities to expedite the movement of goods; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. JAISHANKAR): (a) During the First India-Central Asia Dialogue at the level of Foreign Ministers with the participation of Afghanistan which was held on 13 January 2019 at Samarkand (Uzbekistan), the then External Affairs Minister proposed to examine the issue of establishment of air freight corridors between India and Central Asia so that goods can be transported more swiftly and efficiently between India and Central Asia. On the occasion of the launch of India-Central Asia Business Council comprising FICCI and the nominated chambers of commerce of the five Central Asian countries, viz. Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in New Delhi on 6 February 2020 in New Delhi, industry representatives were tasked to look at the issue of viability of air corridors between India and Central Asia with greater focus. At this stage, we are examining the proposal to establish the air corridors.

- (b) It is expected that the establishment of viable air freight corridors would enhance trade between India and Central Asia, including that of perishable goods, agricultural and food products.
- (c) Modalities of setting up of air corridors are expected to be worked out in due course.
- (d) Does not arise.

#### **Hindi medium and regional languages in Civil Services Examination**

\*198. DR. SANTANU SEN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware that the exam pattern of UPSC Civil Services Examination is discriminatory in nature for Hindi medium and regional language candidates;