

deliberations, and attempts to bring in such issues have never been allowed to succeed. While SAARC may not have fully fulfilled the high expectations for regional cooperation, it has many achievements to its credit.

(b) As in the past, similarly in future also India will not allow the SAARC Charter to be violated by anyone bringing up bilateral issues, India will also exert maximum efforts to push the SAARC process for regional co-operation further.

Training of drivers

*154. SHRI R. KAMARAJ: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the increasing trend of road accidents in our country;

(b) if so, whether Government are considering to train drivers to international standard to decrease the number of accidents; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS MAJOR GENERAL (RETD.) (B.C. KHANDURI): (a) The total number of road accidents has been increasing over the years, keeping in view the increasing number of motor vehicles coming on the roads. However, as a result of various safety measures taken by the Government, the number of accidents per ten thousands vehicles has been steadily declining over the last few years. The details are given below:

Years	Total No. of registered motor vehicle (in thousands)	Total No. of road accidents (in number)	Number of road accidents per 1000 vehicles
1	2	3	4
1996	33786	371204	109.87
1997	37332	373671	100.09
1998	41368	385018	93.07
1999	44875	386456	86.12
2000	48393(P)*	391449	80.89(P)*

P* Provisional

(b) and (c) Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989 prescribe standards suited to Indian conditions for training of drivers and these are comparable to international standards. Training of drivers is an important element of the road safety programmes undertaken by the Government and has contributed to the declining trend in accidents. In the current year financial assistance has been given by the Government to impart refresher training to approximately 19000 heavy vehicle drivers. The decline in trend of accidents is also due to other Engineering, Education and Enforcement measures undertaken by the Government to improve road safety. Some of the other measures taken by the Government to improve road safety are as under:

- (1) About 15,750 drivers of heavy motor vehicles have been provided refresher training in the last Plan period.
- (2) Publicity campaigns on road safety awareness through audiovisual-print media.
- (3) Grants-in-aid is provided to voluntary organizations for administering road safety programmes.
- (4) Use of simulators in driver's training is encouraged.
- (5) National Award instituted for voluntary organizations/individuals for outstanding work in the field of road safety.
- (6) All India Essay Competition on road safety are organized for school children for creating awareness among the school children.
- (7) Fitness norms for transport vehicles have been tightened.
- (8) Widening/improvement of roads.

Indian Overseas Workers Welfare Fund

*155. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA:
DR. ABRAR AHMED:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any final decision on constitution of the Indian Overseas Workers Welfare Fund to safeguard interest of the Indian overseas workers going overseas for employment on a contractual basis; and