

available information and existing problems relating to water resources development.

(b) to (e) Does not arise.

[English]

Visa Norms

2208. SHRI NADENDLA BHASKARA RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have decided to liberalise the visa regime for Pakistani nationals visiting India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have requested Pakistan to liberalise its visa procedure on reciprocal basis; and

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith response received from Pakistan in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONIC (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (d) During Prime Minister's recent visit to Pakistan on 20-21 February 1999, and following his meetings with Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, it was decided that India and Pakistan would hold consultations with a view to further liberalising the visa and travel regimes.

In keeping with Government's policy of promoting people-to-people contact, India had unilaterally eased its visa regime in 1997 for Pakistani nationals. Some salient features of these unilateral concessions are: (i) An increase in the maximum number of cities to which Pakistani nationals can travel during a visit to India from eight to twelve; (ii) Grant of one-year multiple-entry visas to eligible Pakistani businessmen whenever necessary, with a provision for different checkpoints for entry into and exit from India; (iii) The international airport at Chennai has been designated as an additional checkpoint for the arrival and departure of Pakistani nationals in addition to Delhi and Mumbai airports and the Attari railhead; (iv) Grant of exemption from police reporting (EPR) visas as far as possible to, *inter alia*, artistes, journalists, students, businessmen, senior citizens and children; (v) Visa fees for, *inter alia*, senior citizens, artistes, students and journalists have been waived; and (vi) Provision to grant visas to eligible reputed Pakistani artistes.

During the first round of the composite dialogue process, India informed Pakistan of these unilateral

measures and urged Pakistan to consider taking similar measures. The Pakistan side informed that they were issuing more visas than in the past to Indian nationals.

Visa to Pakistani Nationals

2209. SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMED SAYEED: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Pakistani Nationals who applied for visa to meet their relatives in India during each of the last three years;

(b) the number of them allowed to visit India;

(c) the number of persons from Pakistan occupied Kashmir granted visa during each of the last three years;

(d) whether any criteria has been fixed by the Ministry to allow Pakistani Nationals to visit India; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (c) The figures are as follows:

	1996	1997	1998
Number of Pakistani nationals who applied for visas to visit relatives in India.	46936	78593	75323
Number of them allowed to visit India	40583	72140	71918
Number of persons from POK granted visa	05	15	35

(d) and (e) Government place great emphasis on encouraging and promoting people to people contact between India and Pakistan. In pursuit of this policy, Government have, in 1997, unilaterally taken measures to ease the visa regime for Pakistani nationals visiting India. In addition grant of visas to Pakistani nationals is governed by the India-Pakistan Visa agreement of 1974 which was revised in 1990.

Y-2K Problem

2210. SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU: Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to solve Y-2K problem in Computer; and