

Changes in Education System

811. SHRI K.S. RAO : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the number of suicides committed by students unable to bear pre and post examination stresses and tensions, has been increasing year after year;

(b) if so, the details of the suicides committed by the students on this account during the last five years; State-wise;

(c) whether a number of eminent educationists and expert Committees have from time to time called for change in the education system, syllabus, method of teaching, system of examination and evaluation in the country;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to improve the entire system of education in the country in the light of experiments in the foreign countries?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI) : (a) Such instances which get reported from time to time have come to the notice of the Government.

(b) No such data-base is maintained by the Government.

(c) and (d) It is a fact that a general concern about the need to change the educational system to reduce the stress-level has been expressed from time to time by several people, including prominent educationists. Several suggestions have been made to make the system more student-friendly.

(e) It is proposed to review to the situation in depth and in consultation with all concerned.

Export of Genetic Material

812. SHRI G. GANGA REDDY : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to set up a national authority for regulation of the export of genetic material, and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI) : (a) and (b) A proposal to enact a law on Biological Diversity is under consideration of the Government. Regulation of access to genetic material and creation of a mechanism to regulate such access form part of the proposal under consideration.

Development of Chilka Lake

813. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Orissa has sought financial assistance from Government for desilting and development of Chilka lake;

(b) if so, the assistance given by the Government for the purpose; and

(c) the steps taken to desilt and develop the lake at the earliest?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government of India has provided financial assistance of Rs. 112.30 lakhs to the Government of Orissa between 1988-1991 for undertaking activities like vegetation and contour bunding, water harvesting structures, gully control, stream bank erosion control, periphery bund, habitat improvement of Nalabana, education awareness work and establishment of information/data base.

The Tenth Finance Commission has recommended an amount of Rs. 27 crores for preservation of Chilka lake under Special Problem Grant. Action plan for Chilka lake for 1996-2000 prepared by Government of Orissa has been approved by Inter-Ministerial Empowered Committee (IMEC) of Ministry of Finance. A sum of Rs. 10.46 crores has already been released to the State Government for development of Chilka lake. Works being undertaken includes improvement of water exchange, salinity cost of dredgers and dredging operation.

Foreign Owned Ships

814. SHRI ANNASAHAB M.K. PATIL : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Indian Courts cannot try cases involving foreign owned ships" appearing in the *Times of India* dated April 26, 1998;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government to the actionable observations made therein and facts of the matter reported therein;

(c) the steps initiated so far to deal with the problem; and

(d) the details of action now proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN) :

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The News Item carried the ruling given by the Supreme Court in an appeal filed on behalf of a foreign shipowner, that Indian Courts did not have any jurisdiction under the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 to entertain and try suits for damages in case of a collision between two foreign-owned vessels, outside the territorial waters of India. The news item did not report any actionable observations for the Government.

Construction of Bypass on NH-4

815. SHRI RAVI SITARAM NAIK : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have acquired the land to construct a bypass at Mardol in North Goa on the National Highway No. 4;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the construction project has been included in the Annual Plan for 1998-99;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Details of acquisition of land are as under :

Sr. No.	Date	Area of land acquired
1.	11.11.91	94,226 sqr. Mts.
2.	29.8.97	3,750 sqr. Mts.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise

(e) This work has relatively a low priority in comparison with works included in the 1998-99 Plan keeping in view the limited funds available for development of National Highways.

[Translation]

Changes in Status of Allahabad University

816. SHRI MOHAN SINGH : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether Uttar Pradesh Government has sent any proposal to declare Allahabad University as a Central University;

(b) if so, the time by which it is likely to be declared as a Central University;

(c) whether any scheme is under consideration of the Government for the development of Allahabad University; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI) : (a) and (b) There has been no recent proposal from the Government of Uttar Pradesh to declare Allahabad University as a Central University. An earlier proposal, mooted by the Allahabad University Teachers' Association in July 1990, and subsequently supported by the Government of U.P. in April 1991, could not be operationalised.

(c) and (d) The various development schemes for Universities are under the purview of UGC, which administers and monitors these schemes.

[English]

Swindling by Egyptian Contactor

817. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Shipping Corporation of India has asked the Indian High Commission in Egypt to help it to reclaim from an Egyptian contractor, nearly seven lakh dollars paid by it for the removal of rubbish/sludge at Port Suez through the fake bills;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for which the Shipping Corporation of India kept on accepting the bills from the Egyptian Contractor for many years;

(d) whether some officials of the Shipping Corporation of India are also involved in this fraud; and

(e) if so, the details in this regard and action taken against them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Shipping Corporation of India Limited (SCI) informed the Indian Embassy at Cairo about the details of the loss of about Rs. 2.40 Crores suffered by SCI for payments made by their Port Said agents to an Egyptian Contactor for removal of rubbish from SCI's vessels transiting through Suez canal. The contractor had been submitting forged 'work done' Certificates. SCI stopped paying such bills as soon as this forgery was detected.

SCI have requested the Indian Embassy at Cairo to help them in recovering this amount.

(d) and (e) The matter is being investigated by Shipping Corporation of India and Ministry of Surface Transport and no conclusion has yet been reached.