

While every effort is made to effect economies, it may be noted that over the last three years, the number of pilgrims performing Haj through the Haj Committee has increased from about 50,000 to over 63,000 which has contributed to the increase in the number of deputationists. For Haj-1998, Government had sent 398 deputationists to Saudi Arabia consisting of the medical mission and administrative staff. This year, based on an assessment of minimum requirements, Government have reduced the number of deputationists to 362.

The total expenditure expected to be incurred on account of the deputationists for Haj - 1999 would be about Rs. 5,83,56,000/-.

Heavy Water Plant in Orissa

3269. SHRI ARJUN SETHI : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the heavy water plant at Talcher of Orissa is not in function at present; and

(b) if so, the specific measures being taken by the Government to make it functional?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The functioning of heavy water plant at Talcher totally depends upon the functioning of the plants of M/s. Fertilizer Corporation of India Ltd. and availability of feed stock (ammonia synthesis gas) therefrom. Since the working of Fertilizer Corporation of India Ltd. Plant continues to be erratic and uncertain no specific measures can be taken by the Department to make the heavy water plant functional at present.

Pay Scales/Allowances for SOs/DOs

3270. SHRI AJIT JOGI :

SHRI P. SANKARAN :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal with the Government for revision of pay scales of Assistants and Section Officers and also desk allowance of Desk Officers of the Central Secretariat Service;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which these proposals are likely to be finalised and implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN) : (a) to (c) Representa-

tions have been received from the CSS Forum etc. for grant of higher pay scales for the grades of Section Officers and Assistants of the Central Secretariat Services (CSS) on the analogy of the pay scales recommended by the Fifth Pay Commission for comparable grades of DANICS/DANIPS etc. The issues of pay scales recommended for the officers of DANICS/DANIPS and desk allowance for Desk Officers of CSS are under consideration of Government but it is not feasible to specify precisely the time likely to be taken in deciding the issues.

Cosmic-Rays

3271. SHRI AMAN KUMAR NAGRA :

SHRI H.P. SINGH :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to form a special team of scientists to develop cosmic-rays to explode the Atomic Energy Plants and explosive depots base in other countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether several developed countries scientists are in advanced stage of developing cosmic-rays;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to conduct research in this filed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE) : (a) and (b) There is no such proposal and therefore the question does not arise.

(c) and (d) No information available and therefore the question does not arise.

(e) In view of (a) and (b) above, the question does not arise.

Tata Institute of Fundamental Research

3272. SHRI VITHAL TUPE : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai has been severely hit by sanctions imposed by US Government after nuclear tests in May, 1998;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the scientists of the institute have urged the Government to take immediate steps to tackle the situation; and

(d) if so, the action taken/proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE) : (a) No, Sir.