

[Translation]

Association of Indian Universities

4124. SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH :
SHRI RAMPAL SINGH :

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have decided to accord recognition to foreign degrees recognised by Association of Indian Universities; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE) (KUMARI SELJA) : (a) and (b). The Government of India have decided that those foreign qualifications which are recognised/equated by Association of Indian Universities, New Delhi shall be deemed as recognised for the purpose of employment to posts and services under the Central Government. No separate orders for the recognition of such foreign qualifications are required.

[English]

Gauge Conversion

4125. DR. SUDHIR RAY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that the people of West Bengal are demanding for gauge conversion of several railway lines for a long period; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF) . (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Phase-I of the Project UNIGAUGE has been taken up for conversion of selected MG/NG lines required on operational/strategic consideration. Several lines passing through West Bengal have been/are being converted under this programme. Remaining MG/NG lines will be considered when Phase-II is taken up.

Committee on Shahtoosh

4126 SHRI SHARVAN KUMAR PATEL : Will the Minister of Environment and Forests be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have set up a Committee to inquire into the procurement and trade of

the precious Shahtoosh wool as it has become a matter of controversy with Chinese authorities demanding a complete ban on sale and trade of items made of Shahtoosh;

(b) if so, the precise circumstances leading thereto and the controversy with China; and

(c) the terms of reference of the Committee ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) and (b). A team, consisting of officials from the Forest Department of Jammu and Kashmir, Scientist from the Wildlife Institute of India and representatives of the Kashmir Handicrafts Traders Welfare Associations has been asked to visit the Ladakh area in Jammu and Kashmir to look into the various issues of the Shahtoosh trade.

Shahtoosh is the underwool obtained from the Tibetan antelope. There are two views on the method of procurement of this wool. According to one view the procurement of Shahtoosh involves killing of the Tibetan antelope. The other view is that it does not involve killing of the animal as the wool is shed by the animal and is collected from the area. The Chinese authorities have voiced their concern at killing of the antelope for Shahtoosh in their country at international meetings and have sought support of India and Nepal. This species is listed in Appendix I of CITES and thus there is a ban on its international trade. The CITES secretariat have also brought this issue to the notice of the Government of India for taking necessary action under the convention and national laws

(c) The joint team will attempt to address the issues relating to :

- i. alleged killings of the animal;
- ii. exact species from which the Wool is being obtained;
- iii. ascertaining the method of collection of the Wool;
- iv. identification of the illegal trade route if any.

Closure/Shifting of Industrial Units

4127. SHRI TARA SINGH :
DR. P VALLAL PERUMAN :
SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD :
SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE :

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Supreme Court has recently directed to the Government of Delhi to either close or shift the industries causing pollution;