

(c) if so, the reasons therefor and whether the aforesaid course is not completed within 15 days and employees are required to take the written examination;

(d) if so, whether Government propose to withdrawn the present practice of conducting examination and to introduce the old practice under which employees were provided knowledge relating to their work; and

(e) if so, by what time and, if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA) : (a) No refresher course of the duration of 35 working days was being held in the recent past. The duration of most of the courses is 12 working days.

Prior to October, 1983, the trainees were required to pass oral and/or practical test only to assess their performance. However, from October, 1983, from the point of the view of safe working of trains, it was decided to subject the trainees to a written test after completion of the training. There is no proposal to dispense with this practice.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

[English]

Indians Immune to AIDS due to 'Herd Structure'

5179. DR. G. VIJAYA RAMA RAO: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a renowned US Bio-physicist has warned of AIDS holocaust creating many serious social problems;

(b) whether as per some Indian Medical Scientists due to 'Herd Structure' Indians are immune to AIDS and if so, whether this contention/theory has any valid scientific basis and if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether such 'herd structure' exists

in population of any other country for any other disease or for AIDS?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (KUMARI SAROJ KHAPARDE) : (a) Yes, Sir. Government has seen the news item.

(b) and (c) / No valid scientific data are available to indicate that any specific human herd structure is immune to AIDS. However, results of some studies conducted in Trinidad has shown that prevalence of AIDS among the Indians is lower than the prevalence of AIDS among other racial groups. Results of some of the studies in U.K. have also indicated that some individuals might be genetically less susceptible to HIV infection. But, these studies are yet to be confirmed.

[Translation]

Priority in Railway Reservation to Correspondents of Newspapers

5180. SHRI RAJ KUMAR RAI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government give priority to the correspondents of newspapers in the matter of reservation in trains; and

(b) if so, whether this facility is given to correspondents of recognised small newspapers also?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Blackmarketing of tickets at Bombay Central Railway Station

5181. SHRI RAJ KUMAR RAI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a large scale blackmarketing in railway reservation at Bombay Central Railway Station and officials pay no attention even to requests from V.I.Ps.;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether any concrete steps are being taken to check the blackmarketing of reservation tickets; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) and (b). No report of large scale blackmarketing in tickets at Bombay Central has been received. Due importance is attached to the requests received from V.I.Ps for release of reserved accommodation out of Emergency Quota.

(c) and (d) Regular checks at Stations and on trains are conducted and raids organised on premises of unauthorised agents with a view to detect cases of transferred reservations and apprehend touts. The number of such checks conducted during the years 1985-86, 86-87 and 87-88 (upto Oct '87) on the Western Railway were 3,915 resulting in detection of 18,121 cases of transferred reservations and realisation of Rs. 30.50 lacs as railway dues/fine. In addition, 90 touts apprehended were prosecuted under Section 114A of the Indian Railways Act.

[English]

National Policy on Zoological Parks

5182. SHRI V. TULSIRAM: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are actively considering to frame a national policy on zoological parks in the country;

(b) if so, whether a report in this regard has been submitted;

(c) whether there is any proposal to establish more zoological parks;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether one such park is likely to be established in Telangana Region of Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MIN-

ISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z.R. ANSARI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A draft of the policy has been circulated to the State Government/Union Territory Administrations.

(c) and (d) The Central Government does not propose to establish any new zoological park. The establishment of new zoological parks is decided upon by the respective State Governments and Union Territory Administrations.

(e) The State Government of Andhra Pradesh have reported that they have no such proposal.

Preservation of Folk Songs

5183. PROF. NARAIN CHAND PARASHAR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to launch a programme for video taping and oral recording of the folk songs of various forms and folk dramas and dances so as to preserve them for future in view of the fast diminishing forms of folk-lore;

(b) if so, whether any coordination would be established with the academies of language, literature, art and culture of the concerned regions as also with the seven zonal cultural centres established recently; and

(c) if so, the nature thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI KRISHNA SAHI): (a) Yes, Sir. Video taping and oral recording of folk songs of various forms and folk dramas and dances are undertaken by Akashvani, Doordarshan Kendras, Sangeet Natak Akademi and the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. Necessary coordination would be established with the agencies concerned, including the Zonal Cultural Centres, depending on the nature of