

thening/maintenance of bridges and RCC structures and control of landslides;

Techniques for strengthening of RCC bridges by external prestressing have vastly improved structural behaviour and load bearing capacity of bridges;

Improved designs of expansion joints for long span bridges has been adopted at the ITO Barrage bridge in Delhi.

Asphalt mulch techniques using coir netting for control of erosion on slopes through vegetation is being propagated by the Coir Board ?

Technique for control of rock-fall by use of geo-grids has been successfully applied on the hill slopes of Nainital.

Technique of compact lime soil columns for improved stability is being effectively adopted on the Jammu-Srinagar highway.

(c) Does not arise.

[*Translation*]

'Talk-Ten' Scheme for Inviting Indian Scientists Settled Abroad

5404. SHRI PRATAP BHANU SHARMA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) the number of the scientists known as 'Talk-Ten' has been prepared by the Government of India with a view to seeking advice from the Indian scientists settled abroad by inviting them on a short visit to India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of the scientists who have visited India so far under this scheme; and

(d) the efforts being made by the Government to make this scheme more attractive and effective in future ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNO-

LOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN) : (a) A UNDP Project entitled 'TOKTEN' is currently in operation for this purpose.

(b) Under this project distinguished Indian expatriate scientists and technologists are invited to undertake short term assignments, on voluntary basis, for the transfer of knowledge/know-how in their areas of specialisation relevant to national priorities, frontier areas of technology and technological innovation in key sectors

(c) 185 Indian expatriate scientists/technologists have so far visited India under this scheme.

(d) The scheme is working satisfactorily and yielding desired effects. No need has therefore been felt to bring in any changes in its operation.

Scheduled Caste Development Corporation

5405. SHRI ASHKARAN SANKHAWAR : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether some State Governments have constituted Scheduled Caste Development Corporations;

(b) if so, the names of the States where these Corporations are functioning and the role being played by them in the development of Scheduled Castes;

(c) whether Government have under consideration any proposal to set up such corporations in other States; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF WELFARE (SHRIMATI SUMATI ORAON) : (a) Yes, Sir. 18 States and 3 Union Territories have constituted Scheduled Caste Development Corporations.

(b) The names of the States and the Union Territories where Scheduled Caste Development Corporations are functioning are : Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa

Punjab, Rajasthan, Tami Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Chandigarh, Delhi and Pondicherry.

These Corporations are envisaged to function as catalysts in the successful implementation of various economic programmes for Scheduled Castes. The promotional role consists of identifying Scheduled Caste beneficiary clusters through special surveys, identification and motivation of eligible beneficiaries, assessment of their felt needs, preparation of suitable economic development schemes for different occupational groups, their financial and other requirements and bringing the target groups in contact with financial institutions and Government development agencies. By providing the Margin Money Loan at low rates of interest and meeting the viability gaps, taking the assistance of the other agencies also, these Corporations prove helpful in encouraging the commercial banks to provide loans to Scheduled Caste beneficiaries on a sufficiently extensive scale.

(c) There are no proposals under consideration.

(d) Question does not arise.

[English]

Cases Pertaining to Election Disputes Pending in Supreme Court and High Courts

5406. SHRI K. RAMACHANDRA REDDY : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of cases pending in various High Courts and Supreme Court pertaining to election disputes to Lok Sabha since 1985;

(b) the reasons for this delay; and

(c) whether the Union Government chalked out any plan to expedite the proceedings of courts in cases of election disputes ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ) : (a) According to the information furnished by the Election Commission, the number of election petitions pertaining to Lok Sabha elections pending in the various High Courts since

1985 is 20; likewise the number of appeals pending in the Supreme Court is 6.

(b) According to sub-section (6) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 trail of an election petition shall, so far as is practicable consistently with the interests of justice in respect of the trial, be continued from day to day until its conclusion, unless the High Court finds the adjournment of the trial beyond the following day to be necessary for reasons to be recorded. Sub-section (7) of the same section provides that every election petition shall be tried as expeditiously as possible and endeavour shall be made to conclude the trial within six months from the date on which the election petition is presented to the High Court for trial. In the said Act, there is no such procedural requirement or time limits in respect of appeals to the Supreme Court. The disposal of election petitions thus tends to get delayed on account of these factors.

(c) The appointments of more Judges in the High Courts would, to some extent, ensure expeditious disposal of election petitions. Accordingly, Chief Ministers and Chief Justices concerned had been requested to send proposals in this regard. Proposals for creation of new posts in some High Courts have also been agreed to. Government are making all possible efforts to fill up the existing vacancies of permanent Judges and Additional Judges in the High Courts and also to make appointments against the new posts to facilitate speedy disposal of election petitions.

Per Capita Plan Allocation for Karnataka

5407. DR. V. VENKATESH : Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state :

(a) the per capita allocation of plan assistance to Karnataka during the Seventh Plan and how does it compare with the Sixth Plan; and

(b) whether any special central assistance has been allocated for the development of tribal areas ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF