

and the wagons were immediately allowed by them to be despatched on 13.1.1979. The question of death on account of starvation or for want of water should not arise as adequate water arrangements exist at Shakurbasti and the owners were travelling in the wagons to look after the cattle.

Ban on Sikhs' Entry into Saudi Arabia

434. SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 465 on the 21st December, 1978 re: ban on the visas for Sikhs visiting Saudi Arabia and state:

(a) what is the latest position of his efforts to get the ban on the entry of Sikhs in Saudi Arabia scrapped; and

(b) whether the Industry Minister during his recent visit to Saudi Arabia as a special emissary of the Prime Minister also took up the matter with the Saudi Arabia Government and if so, the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SAMARENDRA KUNDU) : (a) The ban on the entry of Sikhs in Saudi Arabia has not yet been removed. The Government of India is continuously pursuing the matter at all levels with the Saudi authorities.

(b) Yes, Sir. The Minister of Industry took up the matter with the Saudi Deputy Prime Minister & Crown Prince during his recent visit to Saudi Arabia when he went as a Special Emissary of the Prime Minister. It is hoped that the ban on the entry of Sikhs in Saudi Arabia will be removed in the near future.

Railway Sponsored Tours of Correspondents

435. DR. BAPU' KALDATE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Railways have been arranging tours for the correspondents all over the country;

(b) if so, how many such tours were arranged during the year 1978;

(c) the names of the correspondents invited and participated in these tours; and

(d) the criterion laid down for the selection of correspondents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SHEO NARAIN) : (a) Yes.

(b) 30 conducted Press Party tours were arranged during 1978.

(c) A list of the correspondents who participated in the tours is given in the Statement laid on the Table of the House. [Placed in Library. See No. LT—3310/79]

(d) The selection of the correspondents normally depends on the nature of the project to be shown and the purpose of the press party. If the intention of organising the press party is to ensure regional coverage of the project, then a newspaper from each of the regional languages and the news agencies of the area are selected by turn. However, if national coverage is required, representatives of the national press are invited.

The invitation is normally sent to the Editor requesting him to spare a correspondent accredited with the Central or the State Governments to join the Press party. The Editor is also requested to make available a correspondent who is familiar with the Railways or who covers the Railways for his newspaper/journal.