

(b) whether Government are considering any proposal to minimise Pakistani visitors problems; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): (a) During the year 1979, the Embassy of India, Islamabad and, Consulate General of India, Karachi together received 1,190,564 visa applications from Pakistani nationals and granted visas to 1,93,255 which included 5038 visas granted by Indian Embassy, Islamabad, on the basis of applications received prior to 1979.

(b) and (c). With a view to minimise any inconvenience to Pakistani nationals seeking Indian visas, the Government of India constantly review ways and methods to facilitate the issue of visas, such as sending additional staff etc. when necessary to help expedite the disposal of visa applications by our Missions. The Office of the Consul General of India at Karachi, which dealt with more than 75 per cent of the total number of visa applications from the Pakistani nationals, has started granting visas to most applicants either on the same day or on the day after the receipt of visa applications. As such, Pakistani nationals are not facing any serious problems.

Extension of Chandigarh-Ranchi Express to Kalka

1300. SHRI NARAIN CHAND PARASHAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a request has been received by Government for the extension of the Chandigarh-Ranchi Express to Kalka for the benefit of the tourist and the people of Himachal Pradesh;

(b) if so, the decision taken by Government on this request; and

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(c) if not, the likely date by which the decision would be taken?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) to (c). Yes, 183/184 Ranchi-Chandigarh triweekly Express is also providing inter-city service between Chandigarh and New Delhi. While it is a fact that the rakes of this train has to be taken to Kalka for purposes of maintenance, it is, however, not desirable to book passengers as the rake is being run to Kalka purely according to operational convenience without following any fixed time schedule. Moreover the passengers at Chandigarh will severely resent loosing the convenience of the only originating train that has been provided to them. Further the extension of Ranchi-Chandigarh Express to Kalka during inconvenient hours in the night will not be of any help to the passengers from Simla area as the connecting trains cannot be run on narrow-gauge during inconvenient hours in the night and passengers, therefore, will have to spend the night at Kalka. This would also not benefit the tourists as well as other passengers desiring to travel to interior parts of Himachal Pradesh.

Expansion of CGHS to cover other Major Cities in the country

1301. PROF. NARAIN CHAND PARASHAR: Will the Minister of HEALTH be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plans to extend the Central Government Health Scheme to cover other major cities of the country in the near future;

(b) if so, whether Simla, Hamirpur, Mandi, Solan and Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh would be covered;

(c) if so, the likely dates by which each one of the above cities would be covered by the scheme; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?