

Mehrauli are being exploited by the contractors;

(b) whether it is also a fact that these labourers have meagre wages with a bonded labour sort system existing, no medical facilities nor compensation for on-duty casualties; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government thereto, and the action proposed to be taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI T. ANJIAH): (a) to (c). According to available information, the labourers working in the stone quarries in Mehrauli are self-employed groups and do not qualify either as bonded labourers or contract labour. The matter, however, is under investigation.

Hindu Pilgrims Visit to Kailash and Mansarover

2026 SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Government have made any efforts with the Government of China to open route to Kailash, Mansarover for Hindu Pilgrims; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir.

Our request to facilitate visits by Indian pilgrims to Kailash and Mansarover has been conveyed in the past to the Chinese side. The then Indian Minister of External Affairs, when he visited China in February 1979, had also taken it up with the Chinese. The Chinese side explained that communication and accommodation facilities had still not been restored in the area. We, therefore, have no indication yet when Indian pilgrims will be afforded facilities to visit these sites. We shall continue to

press the matter with the Chinese suitably.

Memorandum from N.F. Railway Cooperative Staff Welfare Committee Alipurduar

2027. SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE:

SHRI SUBHODH SEN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received memorandum dated 10th May, 1980 from the Secretary, North Frontier Railway Cooperative Staff Welfare Committee, Alipurduar Junction Branch;

(b) if so, the salient points thereof; and

(c) the steps, so far taken by Government to fulfil the demands raised in the memorandum?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) Yes.

(b) The salient points are:

(i) to treat all staff serving in different cooperatives run by railwaymen under each zonal railway as full-fledged railwaymen with all benefits entitled to railwaymen;

(ii) to allot railway quarters to cooperative staff;

(iii) to extend medical facility both indoor and outdoor for full family;

(iv) to sanction 4 sets of passes and 3 sets of PTOs to all cooperative staff.

(c) The Cooperative Societies formed by the Railway employees are autonomous bodies and their employees are not railwaymen. They cannot therefore, be termed as railwaymen and cannot be governed by the terms and conditions applicable to the Railway employees. However, the

undermentioned concessions have been extended to them:—

(i) They are considered for absorption in Class IV vacancies after eligible Casual Labour and substitutes have been considered. For this purpose, they are given relaxation in age limit to the extent of 5 years or service rendered whichever is less. The age concession is also admissible for appearing before the Railway Service Commission for selection to Class III categories. On absorption, they become entitled to all benefits given to other railwaymen, including allotment of quarters.

(ii) The staff are granted Passes/PTOs, as an ex-gratia measure, on the restricted scale as given below:—

Passes:

First two years—Nil

3rd to 20th year—1 set per annum.

21st year and over—2 sets per annum.

P.T.Os.

2nd year onward—3 sets per annum.

(iii) Family members of staff of Consumer Cooperative Societies are given indoor and outdoor medical facilities on *per capita* basis.

Railway Platform Bookstalls

2028. SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have accepted it as a policy since 1975 that the bookstalls on the Railway platforms would be allotted only to unemployed graduates;

(b) if so, how many bookstalls were allotted to unemployed graduates/

their organisations since then in various Zonal Railways;

(c) whether it is a fact that some big contractors continued to get allotted the bookstalls in various zonal railways after 1975, despite applications from unemployed graduates; and

(d) if so, the details of such parties and action taken to terminate their contracts?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) In the year 1973, it was decided that all fresh allotments of bookstalls at stations having no bookstalls and at new stations will be made only to Cooperative Societies of unemployed graduates in the age group of 18 to 30 years. There have been some modifications to this policy since then and as per present policy, all fresh allotments of bookstalls are exclusively meant for individual unemployed graduates within the age group of 18 to 30 years, their partnerships, cooperatives, associations and the cooperative societies of actual workers and vendors of railway bookstalls at:—

(i) stations having no bookstalls at present but where a bookstall may be considered necessary;

(ii) new stations which may be opened in future;

(iii) new platforms added on or after 1.1.76 to existing stations even if there is already a bookstall.

(b) 159 bookstalls at stations and 6 mobile library-cum-bookstalls on trains.

(c) and (d). No bookstall has been allotted to any major bookstall contractor at stations. However, 2 mobile library-cum-bookstalls each are being operated by M/s Higginbothams & Sons and M/s Wheeler & Co. on *ad hoc* temporary basis pending final allotments to eligible categories.