

(c) whether it is a fact that a large number of foreign and Indian tourists visit this place every year;

(d) whether Sohana has been included in the tourists places of India under the programme of the International Tourist year; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

The Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation (Dr. Karan Singh): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Details of the scheme are awaited from the State Government.

(c) No statistics are available about the number of visitors to Sohana. It is however not included in the tourists' itinerary at present due to lack of facilities.

(d) and (e). No, Sir as facilities have not yet been provided.

Trunk Highways in India

822. Shri Sequelra: Will the Minister of Transport and Shipping be pleased to state:

(a) the main trunk Highways in the country at present;

(b) the load limitation (maximum GVW) permitted on each of these roads in tonnes; and

(c) whether higher loads are going to be permitted and if so, where and when?

The Minister of Transport and Shipping (Dr. V. K. V. Rao): (a) to (c). The Government of India are primarily responsible for roads declared as National Highways. All roads other than National Highways in States are essentially the responsibility of the State Governments concerned. A list of the roads included in the existing National Highway System is attached. There is no uniform load limitation for vehicles operating on these highways, as the load carrying capacity of various sections of the road and of the bridges and culverts thereon varies widely. The limita-

tion varies from road to road depending upon the condition of roads and bridges, and also from State to State as the subject of laying down load limitations for vehicles operating on roads covering both National Highways and other roads falls within the sphere of State activities. Recently, a suggestion was made to the Chief Engineers of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat and West Bengal to consider permitting a uniform gross laden weight of 15 tons on the Delhi-Bombay and Delhi-Calcutta routes. The enforcement of this increased laden weight limit will become operative as soon as necessary improvements to and strengthening of the road crust and the structures on the road are carried out as and where needed.

Use of Aquifers for Water Supply

823. Shri M. L. Sondhi: Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the advantages of aquifers to ensure water supply for food production;

(b) whether Government have studied the proceedings and recommendations of the International Conference on Recharge and Management of aquifers;

(c) whether Government have corresponded with countries which have research projects on aquifers to secure technical know-how; and

(d) whether Government have plans for large scale use of aquifers?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Community Development & Cooperation (Shri Annasaheb Shinde): (a) Yes. The Exploratory Tubewells Organisation under the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Community Development and Cooperation has been carrying out ground water exploration in the different parts of the country since