

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) to (d) Government understand that Pakistan has denied visas to pilgrims from Jammu & Kashmir who wished to visit Pakistan as part of the Indian jathas under the bilateral Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines, 1974.

Government believes that Pakistan's actions are contrary to the bilateral Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines, 1974. This matter has been taken up strongly with the Government of Pakistan.

Replacement of Cables

622. SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN:

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the progress made so far in the replacement of existing cables by the optical fibre cables in different telephone exchanges of rural areas in Orissa particularly in Balasore district, location-wise;

(b) whether all the works have been completed in this regard; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA). (a) For providing reliable media to telephone exchanges in Orissa plans have been finalised and work will be done in a phased manner. At present about 1000 km optical Fibre Cable laying work is in progress through out the Circle. There is a proposal to connect 75% of the exchanges on Optical Fibre Cables as per statement in Balasore District. 75 kms of pipe has already been laid and the balance is being laid progressively.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. The work is being done progressively. Project Estimate has been sanctioned and budget provision has been made. Order for 50% quantity has been issued for Optical Fibre Cables and equipment. Laying of 110 Kms. of Optical Fibre Cables is already in progress in Balasore District.

Statement

Telephone exchanges where optical fibre cable is proposed to provided in Balasore District

| Sl. No. | Name of the Exchanges |
|---------|-----------------------|
| 1 | 2 |
| 1. | Anantpur |
| 2. | Basta |
| 3. | Bahanaga |
| 4. | Balgovindpur |
| 5. | Baunsadiha |
| 6. | Chandeswar |
| 7. | Dehurda |

| 1 | 2 |
|-----|------------|
| 8. | Gandbad |
| 9. | Khaira |
| 10. | Kupari |
| 11. | Rajghat |
| 12. | Rajnilgiri |
| 13. | Remuna |
| 14. | Rasaipur |
| 15. | Rupsa |
| 16. | Simulia |
| 17. | Tudigodia |

[Translation]

Separate Passport to Children

623. SHRI ANAND RATNA MAURYA:

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI:

SHRI PANKAJ CHOUDHARY:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have recently decided to discontinue the present system of including the names of the children in the parent's passport and a separate passport is required for the children;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) by when, it is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Since the endorsement of the child's name on the parent's passport was done without any photograph of the child it was open to extensive misuse. Besides, a majority of countries have stopped issuing visas to children whose names were endorsed on their parent's passports.

(c) The scheme for issue of separate passports to such children came into effect on the 29th October, 1998.

Production of Major Crops

624. SHRI RAMPAL SINGH:

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the growth rate of major crops in India is very low as per the World's norm in spite of India being the second largest country in Agriculture sector;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government have formulated any special plan to increase the production of major crops in the country; and