

available information and existing problems relating to water resources development.

(b) to (e) Does not arise.

[English]

#### Visa Norms

2208. SHRI NADENDLA BHASKARA RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have decided to liberalise the visa regime for Pakistani nationals visiting India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have requested Pakistan to liberalise its visa procedure on reciprocal basis; and

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith response received from Pakistan in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONIC (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (d) During Prime Minister's recent visit to Pakistan on 20-21 February 1999, and following his meetings with Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, it was decided that India and Pakistan would hold consultations with a view to further liberalising the visa and travel regimes.

In keeping with Government's policy of promoting people-to-people contact, India had unilaterally eased its visa regime in 1997 for Pakistani nationals. Some salient features of these unilateral concessions are: (i) An increase in the maximum number of cities to which Pakistani nationals can travel during a visit to India from eight to twelve; (ii) Grant of one-year multiple-entry visas to eligible Pakistani businessmen whenever necessary, with a provision for different checkpoints for entry into and exit from India; (iii) The international airport at Chennai has been designated as an additional checkpoint for the arrival and departure of Pakistani nationals in addition to Delhi and Mumbai airports and the Attari railhead; (iv) Grant of exemption from police reporting (EPR) visas as far as possible to, *inter alia*, artistes, journalists, students, businessmen, senior citizens and children; (v) Visa fees for, *inter alia*, senior citizens, artistes, students and journalists have been waived; and (vi) Provision to grant visas to eligible reputed Pakistani artistes.

During the first round of the composite dialogue process, India informed Pakistan of these unilateral

measures and urged Pakistan to consider taking similar measures. The Pakistan side informed that they were issuing more visas than in the past to Indian nationals.

#### Visa to Pakistani Nationals

2209. SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMED SAYEED: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Pakistani Nationals who applied for visa to meet their relatives in India during each of the last three years;

(b) the number of them allowed to visit India;

(c) the number of persons from Pakistan occupied Kashmir granted visa during each of the last three years;

(d) whether any criteria has been fixed by the Ministry to allow Pakistani Nationals to visit India; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (c) The figures are as follows:

	1996	1997	1998
Number of Pakistani nationals who applied for visas to visit relatives in India.	46936	78593	75323
Number of them allowed to visit India	40583	72140	71918
Number of persons from POK granted visa	05	15	35

(d) and (e) Government place great emphasis on encouraging and promoting people to people contact between India and Pakistan. In pursuit of this policy, Government have, in 1997, unilaterally taken measures to ease the visa regime for Pakistani nationals visiting India. In addition grant of visas to Pakistani nationals is governed by the India-Pakistan Visa agreement of 1974 which was revised in 1990.

#### Y-2K Problem

2210. SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU: Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to solve Y-2K problem in Computer; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the latest position in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government of India has constituted a High Level Empowered Action Force on managing the Impact of Year 2000 problem in India under the Chairmanship of Member, Planning Commission. The composition and Terms of Reference of the Action Force are given in the Statement.

2. Government Departments are already seized of the issue and have set up internal task forces/initiated action to co-ordinate the exercise for Y-2K compliance. Their progress is being reviewed by the Task Force at the highest levels in the Government.

3. The Department of Electronics has issued: 'Year 2000 Survival: A Practitioner's Guide' to all concerned and jointly with the software industry has also brought out a directory of Indian Y-2K solution providers and complaint companies. A website Y2K.GOV.IN has been created which carries all relevant information. It has hyperlinks to Y2K site of important countries.

#### **Statement**

*Subject: Constitution of High Level Empowered Action Force on Managing the Impact of Year 2000 Problem in India*

Following is the composition:

1. Member (A), Planning Commission	Chairman
2. Special Secretary, Planning Commission & Director General, NIC	Member-Convener
3. Secretary (Expenditure)	Member
4. Secretary, Department of Electronics	Member
5. Secretary, Department of Telecommunications	Member
6. Secretary, Defence	Member
7. Chairman, State Bank of India	Member

8. Chairman, Railway Board	Member
9. President, CII	Member
10. President FICCI	Member
11. President MAIT	Member
12. Executive Director, NASSCOM	Member

The Terms of Reference of the Action Force are as follows:

- (i) To identify critical sectors in the country which are required to be monitored for handling the Year 2000 Problem in the country.
- (ii) To get Sector-specific action plan prepared by the respective organizations/agencies for remedial work related to the Year 2000 Problem.
- (iii) Periodically monitor the implementation of the Action Plans.
- (iv) To make plans for awareness building among the affected categories of organizations, the Parliament, the Press and the Public.
- (v) To take necessary steps for the establishment of a corpus fund of Rs. 700 crores to address the Year 2000 Problem in India.
- (vi) To evolve a mechanism for providing financial support, out of the corpus fund, to various Government organizations/PSUs/Companies and other affected organizations/activities in handling the impact of Year 2000 problem on the computer based activities and services offered by them.
- (vii) To keep contingent action plans for various sectors in readiness to meet possible post 1999 outbreak situations.

#### **Below Poverty Line**

2211. SHRI JAYSINHJI CHAUHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government propose to formulate any comprehensive scheme for the development of those States where 40% of the people have been living below poverty line;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and