

(a) whether the Government of Kerala has requested to declare M.C. Road in Kerala as a National Highway; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Union Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. During Seventh Five Year Plan, the Government of Kerala had projected this road for inclusion in the National Highway grid. However, due to financial stringency and other priority considerations, it has not possible to declare this road as a National Highway.

Alleged Misbehaviour with Bunk Passengers at Madras

4784. SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received any complaints about the harassment to bunk class passengers at Madras at the time of obtaining bunk tickets for travel from Madras to Port Blair by Government-run ships during the last one year;

(b) if so, whether the Government have any enquires into such complaints;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the action taken by the Government to ensure that the security-guards on duty at Madras do not misbehave with the bunk passengers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The harassment to bunk class passengers in getting tickets at Madras was due to certain deficiencies in the earlier ticketing procedure. The Andaman and Nicobar Administration has streamlined the procedure with effect from 1-9-1991. As per the revised procedure, the Deputy Resident Commissioner of A&N Administration at Madras finalises the complete list of the Administration's quota and forwards the same to the Office of the Shipping Corporation of India at Madras for ticketing. M/s RITES have also undertaken a project for improving and computerising the entire procedure of reservation and ticketing. With the ongoing implementation of their recommendations for streamlining the systems, it is expected that the harassment and hardships to the passengers will get eliminated.

(d) The security guards provided at Madras are employees of an outside agency to whom the security contract has been awarded. The Officer of Shipping Corporation of India Ltd. at Madras is maintaining a strict vigil on the conduct of the security guards. A proper public grievance handling system has been provided by the Madras Office of SCI. Any complaint received from the passengers is attended to immediately.

Financial Assistance to SCs/STs for Establishing Gas Agencies and Petrol Pumps

4785. SHRI M.G. REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any financial assistance is provided to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for establishing petrol pumps and L.P.G. agencies; and

(b) if so, the number of such SC/ST beneficiaries at present, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR

SINGH): (a) and (b). The public sector oil companies in consultation with Government are operating a scheme for awarding dealership/distributorship under 'Special Objective Scheme', covering the establishment of petrol pumps and dealership in LPG. Under the scheme 25% of the dealership/distributorship is reserved for SCs/STs. Financial assistance is given by banks to the allottees, including SCs/STs, of various categories for dealership/distributorship awarded by the public sector oil companies. However, the data collection system in RBI does not generate information about the number of such beneficiaries, state-wise, who have obtained loans from the banks.

Trade Relations with Cuba

4786. SHRI B.N. REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned 'Cuba for India as major ally' appearing in the Hindustan Times dated November 27, 1991; and

(b) if so, the fields in which trade relations between India and Cuba are proposed to be made?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Both India and Cuba are contracting parties to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) which covers trade relations amongst all signatories to GATT. In addition, India and Cuba are also members of the Global Systems of Trade Preferences (GSTP) which provides for preferential trading arrangements among the members of the G-77.

Indo-Cuban trade covers a wide variety

of goods, Major Indian exports are engineering goods, project goods, textiles, and chemicals and allied products. Major Indian imports from Cuba are crude minerals, metaliferrous ores & metal scrap, medicinal & pharmaceutical products.

[Translation]

Export of Agricultural Products and Fruits

4787. SHRI MAHENDRA KUMAR SINGH THAKUR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of agricultural products and fruits being exported from India;

(b) the scheme formulated by the Government to increase the production of the products, proposed to be exported during 1992; and

(c) the incentives and facilities provided by the Government to farmers to increase the production of such products?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHED): (a) Spices, cashew, tobacco, rice, wheat, sugar, fresh fruits and vegetables, processed fruits and vegetables, coarse grains like maize, barley, jowar, ragi are the major agricultural products exported from India.

(b) and (c). To increase agricultural production in order to generate surpluses for exports, the following three-fold strategy is followed: (i) increase in area/yield; (ii) productivity efficiencies through adoption of best production and post harvest technologies and high quality management; and (iii) back-up support through relevant R&D and extension. It is a continuous process.