

(c) In compliance of the directions of the Honourable Supreme Court, the Central Government (Ministry of Environment & Forests) has constituted the Central Ground Water Board as an Authority by notification issued on 14th Jan. 1997.

Excess Traffic on Roads

886. SHRI PAWAN DIWAN : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of road traffic on National Highways in total percentage of road traffic in the country;

(b) whether the Government are aware that in the 1.62,000 kms. of State and National Highways a big portion *i.e.* 64% in one lane only whereas a small portion 2% is four lane and remaining portion is two lane; and

(c) if so, the steps proposed to be taken by the Government for tackling the problem of excess traffic on roads in the country?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) National Highways carry about 40% of the total traffic in the country.

(b) The Central Government is primarily concerned with the development of National Highways only. The development of other roads falls within the purview of respective State Governments. National Highways totalling a length of 34,608 Km., comprises 78% of two lane sections, 20% single lane sections and 2% four lane sections.

(c) To tackle the problem of excess traffic, the National Highways are being widened in phases subject to the availability of funds.

[English]

Return of Artefacts

887. SHRI T. GOPAL KRISHNA :
SHRI DHIRENDRA AGARWAL :
SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL :

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Government have made any move for return of the large number of Indian artefacts including Kohinoor taken by the British from India during their reign over the country; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the U.K. Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Sankosh River Project of W.B

888. SHRI SIBU SOREN : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that Sankosh River Project of West Bengal is being included in the Ninth Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the areas of tea-gardens, forests and agriculture land involved in the project; and

(d) the details of land proposed to be acquired and the total number of persons likely to be displaced due to Sankosh Project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SIS RAM OLA) : (a) and (b) The Sankosh Multipurpose Project would be taken up for implementation in the IX Plan as soon as it is finalised.

(c) and (d) As per the Environmental Impact Assessment studies carried out by Water and Power Consultancy Services Ltd., (WAPCOS) recently, the total land needs to be acquired for the canal portion of Sankosh Project in India is 2574 ha. The detailed break up of land to be acquired are:—

(i) Tea Garden (ha.)	936.18
(ii) Forest (ha.)	1145.16
(iii) Agriculture (ha.)	342.52
(iv) Fallow land and land not available for cultivation (ha.)	150.17
Total	2574.03

The total number of affected persons are about 21500 in West Bengal.

Setting up of Sub-regional Airline

889. SHRI CHANDRA BHUSHAN SINGH : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have agreed to set up a sub-regional Airline to be jointly run with Thailand, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh; and

(b) if so, the *modus-operandi* discussed between the member countries to run the said proposed Airline?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) and (b) The proposal for setting up an airline jointly run by Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand has been initiated by the Thai Government. No details have been worked out so far.

**Linking of Bangalore-Pune N.H. to
Bangalore-Chennai N.H.**

890. SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Bangalore-Pune National Highway is being linked with Bangalore-Chennai National Highway;

(b) whether the State of Karnataka has urged the Union Government for assistance; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Two estimates amounting to Rs. 11.60 crores and Rs. 14.40 crores, with sharing on matching basis between Central Government and State Government have been approved; *i.e.* widening and improving existing single lane state road to double lane from Dobbespeta on NH-4 with Devanahally on NH-7 and Attibele on NH-7 via Hoskote on NH-4, respectively.

[*Translation*]

Allotment of out-of-turn Gas Connections

891. SHRI VINAY KATIYAR : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have allotted any out-of-turn L.P.G. connections during the last six months;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the basis on which these connections were allotted?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. During the last six months 755 LPG connections were released on out-of-turn basis. These connections have been sanctioned to blind persons on the recommendations of various Associations/Organisations of the blind persons, individuals on their request, and recommendations from

VIPs and public representatives including MPs and ex-MPs in urgent and deserving cases at the discretion of the Government.

[*English*]

Kerosene

892. SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that a large quantity of Kerosene is diverted to be sold through certain petrol pumps in Bombay;

(b) if so, whether the profits made through this kerosene diverted for adulteration purposes is distributed among the persons involved therein;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) to (d) There is no such information with the Government and Government does not have any information about the sharing of profits of such diverted kerosene among different persons.

However, a study made, about three years ago, by a consultancy agency, had indicated diversion of kerosene at different points particularly through wholesalers for the purpose of adulteration and sale in black market, etc. Central Government has taken a number of steps to check diversion and adulteration, and as retail distribution by whole-salers, where mostly diversion takes place, is the responsibility of State Governments. They have also been advised to rationalise the system of distribution and to plug loopholes to prevent diversion and adulteration.

Literacy Percentage in Rajasthan

893. COL. (RETD.) SONA RAM CHOUDHARY : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Literacy percentage of males & females in Barmer, Jaisalmer and Jalore districts of Western Rajasthan is the lowest in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Union Government have given large amount to Rajasthan Government for eradication of illiteracy;