

implementation of resettlement and rehabilitation programmes. The draft policy document in this regard has been finalised by the National Water Board for consideration of the National Water Resources Council. The implementation of the said Policy depends on its adoption by the National Water Resources Council.

[Translation]

#### Ground Water in Bihar

\*4105. SHRI SURENDRA PRASAD YADAV (Jhanabad): Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government have received any scheme from the Government of Bihar for increasing the underground water level in the State;

(b) if so, the latest position thereof;

(c) whether the Union Government propose to implement this scheme in other State also;

(d) if so, whether the Government have mobilised additional financial resources for the implementation of the scheme; and

(e) the time by which the Union Government are likely to clear the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

#### Jasauli Irrigation Project

\*4106. SHRI RAM SHAKAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government propose to undertake major irrigation projects in the country during the current year;

(b) if so, the present status of the Jasauli irrigation project in Sonbhadra district of Uttar Pradesh; and

(c) the time by which the work on the project is likely to commence?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Irrigation being a State subject, irrigation projects are undertaken by the State Governments out of their own resources and as per their own priority. Central Government gives only investment clearance to major and medium irrigation projects.

(b) and (c) No project by name Jasauli Irrigation Project has been received in Central Water Commission from the State Government of Uttar Pradesh for techno-economic appraisal.

[English]

#### Visit to Religious Places

4107. SHRI S.S. OWAISI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of pilgrims who visited various religious places abroad during each of the last three years, religious place-wise;

(b) the criteria being adopted for their selection, religious place-wise; and

(c) the financial/logistic/organisational assistance provided to the pilgrims religious place wise and number of pilgrims likely to visit these places during 1999?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (c) The number of pilgrims who have visited various religious places abroad during the last three years religious place-wise is as under:

	1996	1997	1998
Haj Pilgrims	75,346	81,766	94,602
Kailash Mansarovar Yatris	435	516	600 (approx.)
Sikh/Sehejdhari and Hindu Jathas to Pakistan	5085	5200	2830 till now

The figures of pilgrims for the year 1998 in respect of Kailash Mansarovar Yatra and the Sikh/Sehejdhari and Hindu Jathas to Pakistan are as of date. The Kailash Mansarovar yatra is still on and it is not possible to indicate how many pilgrims will actually undertake the Yatra by the time last batch leaves in the first week of September, 1998. The number of pilgrims of Sikh/Sehejdhari and Hindu Jathas who will visit Pakistan in October and November 1998 is not available. (In October and November 1997, the number of pilgrims who visited Pakistan was 50 and 2290 respectively.)

• The criteria adopted for the selection of pilgrims religious place-wise is as follows:

#### **Haj Pilgrims**

All intending pilgrims submit their applications to the respective State Haj Committees accompanied by a bank draft of Rs. 5280/- towards Registration fee and advance accommodation money. Any Muslim who is a citizen of India can make an application for Haj pilgrimage except (i) those who have performed Haj during the last five years; (ii) those suffering from polio, tuberculosis, congestive cardiac ailment, acute coronary insufficiency and coronary thrombosis, infectious leprosy or any other communicable disease or disability or are handicapped; (iii) children upto the age of 16 years (infants upto two years of age can, however, accompany their parents); (iv) ladies who are pregnant for 20 weeks or more on the date of departure of their flight; and (v) persons who are crippled, handicapped or otherwise physically incapacitated such as suffering from amputation of their legs or polio.

#### **Kailash Mansarovar Yatris**

Information about the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra is published nation-wide through the medium of television, radio and press. Applications are registered on a first-come-first-served basis. Applicants are required to be physically and medically fit and have to undergo a medical check-up in New Delhi and in Gunji, Uttar Pradesh, before being permitted to undertake the Yatra.

#### **Sikh/Sehejdhari and Hindu Jathas**

The lists of Jathas are prepared by various Sikh/Hindu organisations and are forwarded to the Ministry of External Affairs through respective State Governments for facilitating issue of visas by Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi.

• The financial/logistic/organisational assistance provided to the pilgrims religious place wise is as under:

#### **Haj Pilgrims**

All aspects of Haj management are handled by the Haj Committee based in Mumbai. It is responsible for collecting the application forms, selecting the pilgrims and finalising the air charter arrangements for their flight to Saudi Arabia.

In Saudi Arabia, the Consulate General of India is responsible for all logistic and welfare support provided to the pilgrims. For this purpose, during the Haj season, in addition to the permanent staff in the Consulate, Government deputed upto 400 officials to provide assistance to pilgrims, including a 224-member medical mission. The consulate also recruits some seasonal staff locally. The Consulate sets up a control room in Jeddah at the Haj terminal, in Makkah and in Madinah, as also a main Haj office in Makkah and Madinah and ten branch offices and medical centres in Makkah.

The Consulate supervises the movement of pilgrims from one point to the other during the Haj season, though day-to-day responsibility is vested in the local government and its agents. The Consulate also supervises arrangements at the Haj air terminal in Jeddah in order to ensure the smooth movement of incoming and outgoing pilgrims.

The total expenditure incurred by the Government of India on Haj in the last three years was as follows:

1995-96	Rs. 39,69,23,000
1996-97	Rs. 81,83,54,000
1997-98	Rs. 122,93,20,000

#### **Kailash Mansarovar Yatris**

In 1996, Government decided to peg the amount payable to Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam (KMVN) by pilgrims at the rate of Rs. 5000/- per pilgrim. The total cost charged by KMVN is Rs. 8250/- Thus, the Government provides a subsidy of Rs. 3250/- per pilgrim to KMVN towards board, lodge and transport arrangements. Government also provides facilities to pilgrims which include medical assistance, security and escort cover through ITBP and UP State Police, communication links between Delhi and places on route on the Indian side and with china, cost of publicity of

Yatra and partial costs of creation of infrastructure, logistics and facilities on the Indian side. Government also bears expenses for aerial evacuation of pilgrims in case of emergencies. A Liaison Officer at Government cost is attached with each batch of the yatris.

#### **Sikh/Sehejdhari and Hindu Jathas**

The Government extends all required assistance, obtains approval of the Government of Pakistan for the visit of each Jatha; coordinates with various State Governments/Ministries/Authorities and forwards the lists of intending pilgrims to the Pakistan High Commission, New Delhi for visas; arranges with the Ministry of Railways special train services for the pilgrims both for onward/return journey; expedites release of foreign exchange from Reserve Bank of India as a special case in view of the fact that permission for Jathas is given at short notice and visas are stamped on the pilgrims' passports which is one or two days prior to the departure of the Jathas; attaches a Liaison Officer from the High Commission of India in Islamabad to render assistance to the visiting pilgrims when they contact for any kind of help etc. No direct financial assistance is provided to the Sikh/Sehejdhari and Hindu Jathas visiting Pakistan.

The number of pilgrims likely to visit these places during 1999 is about 1 lakh Haj pilgrims, approximately 600 Kailash Mansarovar Yatris, and about 5200 pilgrims of Sikh/Sehejdhari and Hindu Jathas to Pakistan.

[Translation]

#### **Food Processing Industry in Uttar Pradesh**

4108. SHRI HARIKEWAL PRASAD:  
SHRI DAROGA PRASAD SAROJ:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have formulated any policy for encouraging the setting up of Food Processing Industries in Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the number of Food Processing Industries which have been provided assistance by the Union Government during the last three Years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) For

promotion of food processing industries in the country. Various policy measures have been provided by the Government. Besides, under the Plan Schemes of the Ministry, financial assistance in the form of soft loan and grant is provided to cooperatives, Non-Government Organisations, Public sector Undertakings, Private Sector Industries, Research Institutions etc. For promotion of the processed food sector. These schemes are project specific and not state specific. Details of measures taken by the Government in this direction are in the attached Statement.

(c) 300 units of food processing industries in Uttar Pradesh have been provided financial assistance during the last 3 years under the Plan Schemes of this Ministry.

#### **Statement**

##### *Details of Measures Taken by the Government*

- (i) Declaration of most food processing industries as high priority.
- (ii) Delicensing all food processing industries except brewing and distillation of alcoholic beverages and those items reserved for small scale sector.
- (iii) Promoting domestic/foreign/NRI investment.
- (iv) Providing fiscal reliefs by reducing or eliminating excise duties in many food products.
- (v) Providing duty relief in excise and customs for food processing industries.
- (vi) Networking with State Governments and assisting Nodal Agencies identified by the State Governments through Plan Schemes
- (vii) Propagation of the concept of backward linkages.
- (viii) Extension of assistance for promotion of post-harvest infrastructure, cold chain etc.
- (ix) Extending assistance for establishment of Food Processing and Training Centres for propagating technology for developing entrepreneurship in the rural areas. Assistance extended so far covers 245 such centres.