

the reply just received from the hon. Minister, I am afraid, is not conveying the correct prevailing picture. I have been a regular user of National Highway No. 5. Ichhapuram town, which is on the inter-State border of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa, has got heavy traffic and being a check-post point, it is flooded with lorry traffic as well.

The surface conditions of National Highway No. 5 between Ichhapuram and Kasibugga is in an atrocious state. In fact, I will be rather mild to use the word atrocious.

It is not a recent situation or development. The bad condition of this highway prevails for over ten years now.

I would like to know the Hon. Minister whether there is any proposal from the Government to have this very bad road condition rectified in the near future?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: I agree with the Hon. Member that the road is in a bad state after the flash floods and heavy rains. Whatever little repair was needed has been done. But we are still awaiting a report from the State Government before we could assess the full damage.

SHRI GOPI NATH GAJAPATHI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am sure our mercurial Hon. Minister has seen the freeways of the USA and the autobahns of Germany. Considering the national highway of this stature linking the two metropolitan cities of Calcutta and Madras should remain in this condition, is indeed pitiable. I would like to highlight that on this particular stretch between Ichhapuram and Kasibugga, there are at least half a dozen railway level crossings as a result of which free flow of traffic is just not possible. Hence, I would like to draw the kind attention of the Hon. Minister of Surface Transport along with the Hon. Minister of Railway to insure the remedy expeditiously. I would also like to know whether there will be any overbridges or sub-ways constructed to ensure free flow of traffic on the national highway?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Sir, the proposals are very good. We will take into these proposals.

MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 713, Shri Ram Tahal Choudhary.

SHRI LOKANATH CHOUDHURY: I also wanted to ask.

MR. SPEAKER: We have gone to the second question.

An Hon. Member: I come from that area. (Interruptions)...

MR. SPEAKER: We have already gone to the next question.

SHRI LOKANATH CHOUDHURY: Will you not allow a supplementary?

[Translation]

Taxation
Incentives to Customs Officials

* 713. SHRI RAM TAHAL CHOUDHURY:
SHRI TEJ NARAYAN SINGH:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether special incentives are provided to the customs officials for detecting the cases of smuggling;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government propose to revise these incentives;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the employees in Income Tax and Excise Departments are also proposed to be provided with similar incentives; and

(f) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefore?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) to (f). A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) There are no special incentives for the customs officials for detecting cases of smuggling. However, there is a scheme for grant of rewards in cases of seizures made, evasion of duty detected under Customs Act, 1962 Central Excise and Salt Act, 1944, and infringement of Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1973, and Gold Control Act, 1968 (since repealed). Under this scheme officials of Customs, Central Excise, Central Police Organisations, State Governments etc. are eligible for rewards.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) & (f). There is also a scheme for grant of rewards to the officers and staff on the income tax side for search and seizure, disposal under summary assessment scheme, recovery of taxes, for scrutiny, and for the representation before Income Tax Appellate Tribunal. Central Excise Officers and Staff are already covered by the scheme referred to in (a) above.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM TAHAL CHOUDHARY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this answer is not clear. Will the hon. Minister give details about the incentives given under this scheme?

SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR: There is a scheme for grant of rewards under Indian Customs Act, 1962, Central Excise and Salt Act, 1944 and Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1973. These rewards are given to the customs officials. The informers who give information to the department and

Government officials, Superintendents of Group 'A', Assistant Collectors of Customs and Central Excise and the Assistant Directors are covered under this scheme. There is a full scheme about which I am giving a brief detail to the hon. Member. From Assistant Directors to A, group officials are covered under it. Although this scheme is not meant for them, but if they do any special kind of work, in such particular cases, the Government gives them a lumpsum amount or promotion or advance increment in their salary. There is a scheme for ex-gratia payment. In cases of seizure of contraband goods, 20 percent of the total value of contraband goods is given as reward. In cases of detection of duty evasion, 30 percent of the amount is given. There is a provision of giving 20 percent as reward by the department on the fine imposed by the Government. But this provision is different in different cases. It is seen how important was that person's participation in the case.

The accuracy of information shown is also seen. How far it is true and what risk he has taken and his information was of how much help, all these things are considered before a person is given the reward. The head of the department can even give an amount of up to Rs. 20 lakh as reward, to the informer. The Government officials who get a salary of up to Rs. 10,000, can also get this reward... (Interruptions)...

MR. SPEAKER: You have given a very long reply.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR: The hon. Member wants detailed information (Interruptions) We have given it to all the people. A Committee has been constituted in this regard and it considers all the things.

SHRI RAM TAHAL CHOUDHARY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister how many officers and staff members have given information by now and how much reward has been given to them?

MR. SPEAKER: How many persons have got this reward. Give the figures, if you have.

SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the year 1986-87, when this scheme was started, reward was given by the Central Board in two cases. Rs. 1 lakh was given as reward to 50 officers and 150 staff members. In 1986-87 there were five cases, in which Rs. 4 lakh and 91 thousand were given to 165 officers and 270 staff members. In 1987-88, there were 19 cases, in which Rs. 13 lakh and 80 thousand were given to 343 officers and 656 staff members. In 1988-89, there were 14 cases, in which Rs. 7 lakh and 17 thousand were given to 172 officers and 428 staff members. In 1990-91, there were 23 cases in which Rs. 27 lakh were given to 118 staff members and 428 officers. In this way, it has been given.

[English]

SHRI E. AHAMED: Sir, the hon. Minister has mentioned about two types of schemes, that is, rewards and incentives. But rewards are being given after taking into consideration their real work and also on the basis of what the officers ascertain. There is absolutely no fixed norm as to how will he be eligible for a reward. Why not the Government just have a comprehensive scheme by which the officers will be given the reward, as a matter of incentive, to have more detection of smuggled goods.

I also understand that some of the officers who are directly involved detecting these smuggling activities are neglected or ignored by the authorities for reasons of their own. Will the Government make an inquiry on such matters?

SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR: First of all, there is no incentive scheme as such. I have not said that there is one reward scheme and one incentive scheme. In fact, I have clarified in Hindi that there is no incentive scheme as such, but there is a reward scheme. We have got a scheme for reward in the Customs Law, Central Excise Law as

also in the Income Tax Law. And I have given the details of rewards. These rewards are given as per certain well-defined criteria and these criteria are examined. I have also given the details of authorities as to who examine at what level. Then, we have got a committee of senior officers who examine all the cases very dispassionately. We certainly try to take cognizance of the contribution made by the officer or the team of officers concerned. In fact, incentives are being given. Out of turn promotions are given. Lump sum award is given. And certain recognition is also given. It all depends entirely upon the performance of the officer concerned.

[Translation]

SHRI TEJ NARAYAN SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, though you, I would like to know from the hon. Minister the criterion of giving these rewards?

MR. SPEAKER: He has already stated about that.

SHRI TEJ NARAYAN SINGH: He has not stated it clearly. In the reply that I have got, there is nothing in this regard. I would only like to know...

MR. SPEAKER: No, he has already stated about it in his reply to the supplementary. I asked him to lay it on the Table.

SHRI TEJ NARAYAN SINGH: I would like to know what are the criteria of giving rewards in the cases of smuggling, in the cases of evasion of income-tax and in the cases of evasion of excise duty separately. Is the reward given uniformly or is there any difference? I would only like to know this.

SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR: I have already stated that the Customs and Central Excise have uniform schemes. But the amount of reward is different in different cases. If the case involves a huge amount, the percentage of reward is also big and if they help in detecting cases involving small amounts, the percentage of reward is also less. The same is the arrangement with

income tax also. A separate system has been evolved in the case of income-tax. Those who work in I.T.O., had to make a summary assessment up to 5 thousand, for which they were given reward up to Rs. 20,000 for the best assessment unit. In the case of refunds, those officials who persuade the people to pay their income-tax within one month are given best awards and in individual cases, this reward can go up to Rs. 1 lakh. If all the papers regarding assessment are sent on time the all India reward in this regard is up to Rs. 20,000. In the same way, a unit of three best summary assessment is given the best assessment reward upto Rs. 20,000 separately.

In this way, different rewards are given for different jobs. Some are given very high rewards and those rewards are decided by the members and the Chairman of the Board after much consideration. This process has been properly used.

SHRI UPENDRA NATH VERMA: Can the Government tell anything in this regard that some persons risked their life in giving information about smuggling and the goods were also seized, but they have only got a part of reward, which were given to them and the remaining part is still to be paid to them. A correspondence was made with the Government also but he has not got the reward yet.

SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR: If the hon. Member gives any information about any persons, we will certainly consider it and they will get, whatever is their rightful. But according to the present information these rewards are given to the people after due consideration. We have been giving these rewards for years. In the year 1988-89, our budget was of Rs. 55 crore and in 1989-90, it was increased to Rs. 74 crore. Whatever reward is being given in the area of income-tax is being also increased. We have been giving these rewards every year. No discrimination is done in giving these rewards.....(Interruptions)

SHRI UPENDRA NATH VERMA: Mr.

Speaker, Sir, I would like to know why is there delay in giving reward to the person who has informed about smuggling and goods has also been seized.

MR. SPEAKER: If there is any such case, you should inform about it.

SHRI UPENDRA NATH VERMA: I have already written about it.

MR. SPEAKER: You should write about it.

SHRI KARIAMUNDA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in spite of so many efforts, smuggling could not be checked so far. Heroin has been seized in Ranchi and Dhanbad district. In Ranchi, one kilogram of second grade heroin has been seized and in Dhanbad, 900 grams of super quality heroin has been seized. Their price is near about Rs. 2 crore. Will the hon. Minister state what arrangement has been made by his department to check the smuggling of heroin in far-off areas and whether they have any scheme in this regard?

MR. SPEAKER: The question is not related with the present issue.

SHRI BUTA SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is a scheme to give a fixed amount of help to the CRPF jawans who are killed while fighting the terrorists. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government has any such scheme to provide compensation to the employees, who die while engaged in big operation against the cases of smuggling, Income-tax evasion or customs evasion?

[Translation]

SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it has always been our endeavour to give maximum reward to those who put their life at stake and provide us sensitive information pertaining to evaders of income-tax, Central Excise and Customs. If the hon. Member has any case in mind in which...(Interruptions)

SHRI BUTA SINGH: In the case of Central Reserve Police Force, if an employe is killed, his family is sanctioned grants-in-aid of Rs. 1 lakh. Besides, one of the family members of the deceased employee is given employment under the rules. Therefore, I am specially asking whether. Is the Government prepared to adopt such a scheme in the case of Customs and Income Tax.

[*English*]

SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR: It is already there in the Income Tax Department.

MR. SPEAKER: It has already been answered.

SHRI RADHIKA RANJAN PRAMANIK: Sir, the Minister has just now said that there are provisions to give reward, promotion or incentives to those officers who detect the cases of smuggling. I would like to inform the hon. Minister that some days back one smuggler was detected while smuggling in Siliguri area.

MR. SPEAKER: He may not have the information.

SHRI RADHIKA RANJAN PRAMANIK: Sir, instead of giving the reward that officer has been suspended. (*Interruptions*)...

MR. SPEAKER: You write to the Minister and he will reply to you.

(*Interruptions*)...

MR. SPEAKER: Please understand that such information is not available with the Minister

SHRI RADHIKA RANJAN PRAMANIK: That news came in the newspaper.

(*Interruptions*)...

MR. SPEAKER: You are unnecessarily

taking up the time of the House. I am disallowing that question.

(*Interruptions*)...

MR. SPEAKER: You write to the Minister. He will reply to it. Please take your seat.

[*Translation*]

SHRI ANNA JOSHI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know when big seizures are made by a team, whether the incentive amount is equally divided or only the officer is rewarded? Secondly, incentives are given to good workers. I would like to know the steps that are taken against the officials against whom number of complaint of corruption and fraud are reported.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Second question does not arise out of it. You can reply to first question, because already a lot has been said about that.

SHRI ANNA JOSHI: Sir, it is regarding the behavior of the Custom Officers.

MR. SPEAKER: There is no law for punishing those who do not do their duty.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, both the officer and the officials who work with him in the team are equally rewarded. However, if any official or any other Member of the team takes more risk, he is given additional reward. Thus, we have provisions to reward both team-wise and individually.

PROF. PREM DHUMAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, although, the hon. Minister has answered this question in response to one of the Supplement arises and also later on, I would like to have it clarified further. The hon. Minister said that rewards are given upto the rank of

Assistant Director. Suppose that somebody gives this type of information and the entire plan to seize the smuggled goods is made at the Director's and even higher level. The team is mostly headed by an officer of the rank of Assistant Director. In this case, the higher officers complain that though the entire plan is made by them, it is only the Assistant Director who gets the reward and not they. In view of the above will the Government formulate a policy under which higher officers will also be rewarded suitably and thus remove the feeling that has spread among these officers.

SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the reward is given either to somebody from among the public who gives such information or to officers who conduct the raids as a part of their duty. Official teams consist of officials of other departments like Narcotics, coast Guard, B.S.F., Police, Income-Tax etc. The reward is given to all those responsible for the seizure and who really make some contribution in it. Otherwise, no one is rewarded, just because they are high Officers.

[English]

SHRI P.C. THOMAS: There are many honest officers in these Departments who are finding difficulties because of harassment from the big smugglers. There are big smugglers who are giving more incentives or trying to influence the officers by giving them those incentives.

So, will this Ministry take this into account and really give the incentives to the real honest officers in a big way ?

MR. SPEAKER: That is done.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR: Not only that, I will try also to give due protection to them.

[Translation]

SHRI RABI RAY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we regularly read in newspapers that there are many such vulnerable areas in the Country like the Coastal States, where Custom Officers are often attacked by smugglers who are equipped with speed boats and sophisticated weapons. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister the provision for rewards for officials working in such vulnerable areas where they are prone to attacks by smugglers and also steps taken to ensure the security of their lives?

SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, such instances of international smuggling take place almost everyday in our coastal areas, our borders with Pakistan and Nepal etc. In Rajasthan, Smugglers and camels. Thus our officials have to face a lot of problems and it has been our endeavour to provide them with necessary equipments including vehicles and sophisticated weapons to deal with these smugglers. We also take the assistance of State Government officials in this regard. It has always been Government's endeavour to provide maximum security to its officials and also encourage them in the execution of their responsibilities.

[English]

Interest Rates of Export Credit

*714. SHRI SUDHIR SAWANT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have recently revised the interest rates on export credit;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the objectives behind it;

(c) whether this step will boost exports; and

(d) the other steps proposed to be taken to boost exports?