

(a) whether Government propose to withdraw the registration fee and admission charged from patients in Union Government hospitals in the country; and

(b) if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI NILAMANI ROUFRAY): (a) and (b). There are no charges for registration and admission in Union Government Hospitals.

Increase in prices of Jute Products

5357. SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether prices of jute bags and the jute products have increased after the implementation of the Jute Packaging Material Act, 1987 and if so, the extent of increase separately;

(b) the objective of enacting the said act and the extent to which these objectives have been achieved; and

(c) whether other industrial units engaged in the manufacturing of packaging material have been affected by this act and if so, the details thereof and the manager in which these have been affected?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES AND FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) Prices of jute bags have increased over a period of time commensurate with the annual increase in Minimum Support Price for raw jute fixed by the Government. Such increases have nothing to do with the implementation of the Jute Packaging Materials Act, 1987.

(b) The Act is primarily intended to safeguard the interests of millions of jute growing farmers in different parts of the country and

lakhs of industrial workers engaged in manufacture of jute goods. The Act seeks to harmonise the interests of both the jute and synthetic sectors providing scope for both the sectors to play their legitimate role in meeting the packaging needs of different sectors of the economy. But for the timely enactment of this legislation, the traditional jute economy would have suffered irreparable damage in the fact of adverse competition from the largely import oriented cheaper synthetic substitutes. However, it should be stated here that the constitutional validity of the legislation has been challenged by some of the private sector synthetic packaging units and private cement companies. Since the matter is subjudice before the Supreme Court of India, it is difficult at this stage to estimate the extent which the objectives behind the Act have been achieved.

(c) The Act has left open a fair share of the market for packaging materials other than jute for meeting the growing requirements of various end-user sectors. Areas and percentage levels not covered by the mandatory orders under the Act are available to other packaging materials which can play their legitimate role in the overall scheme of things.

[English]

Affairs of Dargah Khwaja Sahab, Ajmer

5358. SHRI HEMENDRA SINGH BANERA: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there have been some financial irregularities regarding funds of Dargah Khwaja Sahab, Ajmer;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the action being taken by Government to prevent misuse of funds in view of involvement of minority?