

Illegal Excavation and Smuggling of Precious Stone

2782. SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases of illegal excavation and smuggling of precious and semi precious stones which have come to the notice of the Union Government in the districts of Kalahandi, Sambhalpur and Bolangir of Orissa during the last three years; and

(b) the steps the Government have taken to contain such illegal excavation and smuggling activities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAV): (a) Government of Orissa has informed that during last three years fourteen cases have been filed against 23 persons apprehended while smuggling out gem-bearing assorted stones.

(b) For checking the clandestine and illegal working of precious and semi-precious stones, the Government of Orissa have taken the following measures since 1990.

- (i) Potential gem bearing areas have been identified by a crash exploration programme. These areas are being leased out to Orissa Mining Corporation, a State Government Undertaking, for mining on its own or through joint ventures.
- (ii) Orissa Minerals (Prevention of Theft, smuggling and other Unlawful Activities) Act, 1990 has been enacted to deal with offenders engaged in illegal working;

trade, sale and possession of Gemstones.

(iii) Special Police Forces are deployed in the sensitive areas for conducting raids on suspected offenders or dealers.

(iv) District Level Co-ordination Committees comprising of the District Collector, local MP and MLAs, Superintendent of Police, District Forest Officer, Joint Director of Mines as members have been set up in Gemstone bearing districts for reviewing enforcement measures and coordinating action for preventing illegal excavation.

Expenditure on Information Wings in U.S.

2783. SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state the average annual expenditure of Political and Information wings of the Embassy of India in Washington and the Information Units in various Consulates in the U.S. put together?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): The average annual expenditure for the period 1990-93 of Political and information wings of the Embassy of India, Washington is:-

Political	Wing-Rs.294.28 (Lakhs)
Information	Wing-Rs.113.72 (Lakhs)

The average annual expenditure for the period 1990-93 of the information Units in the various Consulates in the U.S. is Rs. 39.66 (Lakhs).