

The production of opium in India being mainly export oriented, the area under poppy cultivation has been progressively reduced having regard to the fall in international demand for opium for medical purposes and the stocks of opium lying in the Government factories, etc. Therefore, while there has been reduction in the area under poppy cultivation, the same is not because of smuggling of opium.

India continues to face a serious problem of transit traffic in drugs, particularly heroin and hashish. This is also evidenced by the significant quantities of these drugs seized in illicit traffic originating mainly from the Near and Middle East and destined to the Western Countries.

Government have taken a number of steps against drug traffic and drug abuse. These steps include strengthening the laws by providing deterrent punishment for drug trafficking (including provision for capital punishment in certain cases) making the offences cognizable and non-bailable and forfeiture of property derived or obtained from illicit traffic in drugs and for preventive detention of persons involved in illicit traffic. Liberalised reward scheme for officers/informers has also been introduced. The preventive machinery has been strengthened.

The Ministry of Welfare have been providing financial assistance to voluntary organisations for setting up of counselling and deaddiction centres. In 1988, 91 such centres were set up. Educational campaigns to create public awareness about harmful effects of drug abuse are also carried out by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Ministry of Education and other Government as well as voluntary bodies.

The matter is also kept under constant watch for appropriate follow-up action.

[English]

Embezzlements in State Bank of Indore

7405. SHRI MANVENDRA SINGH:
SHRI RAJ KUMAR RAI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of officers/employees found guilty for embezzlements in the State Bank of Indore against whom action has been taken during the last three years;

(b) the number of such cases in which suspension orders were issued but the orders have not been complied with so far and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the number of officers/employees of the Bank whose cases of embezzlements are still ending for the last three years but charge-sheets has not been issued to them and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) to (c). State Bank of Indore has reported that during the last three years i.e. 1986, 1987 and 1988 no case of embezzlement in the Bank has come to light and, therefore, the question of initiating and disciplinary action against any official during this period did not arise.

Monitoring of Legal Expenses of Nationalised Banks

7406. SHRI D.P. JADEJA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been an increase in the legal expenses incurred by the nationalised banks for recovery of loans advanced by them;