

closed due to various factors including financial difficulties are showing keenness for reopening and in fact some of them have already resumed working and few others are likely to reopen in near future.

Alleged Involvement of Government Officials in Smuggling

4153. DR. A. U. AZMI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Customs authorities have registered a case under the Customs Act, 1962, against four Heads of Departments of U.P. Government and their subordinates of alleged involvement in smuggling of goods into the country from Nepal borders;

(b) if so, full details of the case together with the action taken thereon and the *modus operandi* in the matter; and

(c) the present position of the case?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PATTABHI RAMA RAO): (a) to (c) On the 22nd March, 1982, the Customs authorities in Lucknow received information that one Shri S. S. Srivastava, proprietor of a photographic concern at Calcutta, had supplied illegally imported cameras and other photographic equipment to the Uttar Pradesh State Government Departments of Tourism, Information, Archaeology and Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants.

Shri S. S. Srivastava, who was apprehended on the 23rd March, 1982, denied having supplied the goods. However, search of his brief case resulted in the recovery of documents revealing that he had in fact supplied the photographic equipment to the above departments.

Letters were thereafter issued by the Customs authorities to the concerned State Government departments to hand over the offending goods for action under the law.

Appropriate proceedings are being initiated under relevant provisions of the Customs law with respect to the offending goods and against the persons found to be *prima facie* concerned in terms of section 112 of the Customs Act, 1962.

Objections by Importing Countries against Export Items

4154. SHRI K. A. SWAMI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any objections have been raised by the importing countries against some of our export items on grounds of non-compliance with their environmental standards; and

(b) if so, the details of the products and the nature of objections?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL): (a) Government is not aware of any such objections raised by importing countries against Indian export items on grounds of non-compliance of environmental standards.

(b) Does not arise.

News-item Captioned "Vayudoot is making Castles in the Air"

4155. SHRI S. M. KRISHNA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Vayudoot has not been found suitable and economically viable to serve as a feeder service;

(b) if so, the reasons for the same;

(c) if not, whether his attention has been drawn to a press report in the Hindustan Times of 3rd October, 1982 under the heading "Vayudoot is making castles in the air"; and

(d) if so, his reaction in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) With the improvement in load factors and induction of more economical aircraft, the economic viability of Vayudoot is expected to improve considerably.

Stagnation in cadre of Stenographers, Grade 'C' in Armed forces Headquarters

4156. SHRI KAMLA MISHRA MADHUKAR : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is acute stagnation in the cadre of Stenographers Grade 'C' in the Armed Forces Headquarters;

(b) the number of Stenographers Grade 'C' who have put in more than 15 years of service but have not received even their first promotion;

(c) what steps Government have taken to improve the promotion prospects of this category of Stenographers;

(d) Whether hundreds of Stenographers Grade 'C' working in the Armed Forces Headquarters are still clamouring for their very first promotion to Stenographer Grade 'B'; if so, reasons thereof; and

(e) what steps Government propose to take immediately to ensure that at least Stenographers Grade 'C' who have put in 13-14 years or more service are given promotion so as to remove the discontentment and demoralisation amongst them?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO): (a) There is stagnation in Grade 'C' of the AFHQ

Stenographers Service but this is not peculiar to the AFHQ only.

(b) 185.

(c) To mitigate stagnation, the following steps have been taken so far:—

(i) 103 Selection Grade posts (Rs. 650-960) sanctioned with effect from 1-8-1976;

(ii) 63 posts of Steno Grade 'C' upgraded to Steno Grade 'B' on ad hoc basis (45 from 6-8-1977 and 18 from 10-12-1979);

(iii) 19 posts of Steno Grade 'C' upgraded to Steno Grade 'B' on 5-8-1982 consequent to the upgradation of the Service Officer posts.

(d) and (e) 344 Stenographers Grade 'C' are yet to get their first promotion. This includes 185 those who have rendered more than 15 years of service in the grade.

The question regarding the improvement of career prospects of Stenographers is being examined by the Department of Personnel & Administrative Reforms, in which the Ministry of Defence are also participating.

Norms for production of salt in case of Exporters

4157. SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any norms have been fixed for the production of salt in case of exporters of salt;

(b) if so, from what date the norms will be applicable;

(c) whether Coramandel Mini Salt Association of Tuticorin has been permitted to export salt; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?