

Amendment in Patent Act

3275. DR. ASIM BALA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is acceded to the demand of amending the 1970 Patent Act by the US and the European countries in the WTO meeting;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is not a submission to internationally imposed Intellectual Property Rights to the developed country's own advantage; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (d) In order to implement the obligations contained in the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), which is a part of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Agreement, India has time till January 1, 2000 to implement the obligations contained in the Agreement and further time till January 1, 2005 to introduce product patent protection to areas of technologies not protected so far. However, the member countries of WTO, who have opted to avail of the latter period, were required to comply with the obligations contained in Articles-70.8 and 70.9 of the TRIPs Agreement with effect from January 1, 1995.

In order to comply with the obligation which came into force from 1st January 1995 and also to comply with WTO rulings in the Indo-US Dispute on Patent Protection for Pharmaceutical and agricultural chemical products, Government is exploring different options and strategies.

VRS in Profit Making PSUs

3276. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to implement Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) in profit making public sector undertakings, particularly for those employees who have completed thirty years of service and have been superseded;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH BADAL): (a) to (c)

The existing Voluntary Retirement Scheme is applicable to all Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), including profit making enterprises. Navratna and Mini-Ratna enterprises have been given freedom to frame their own Voluntary Retirement Scheme. Other profit making enterprises also can formulate their own Voluntary Retirement Schemes, with no budgetary support, with the approval of the Government. Under such schemes, the respective PSUs might allow such compensation that may suit individual requirements.

Alleged Corruption in SEBI

3277. SHRIMATI KAMAL RANI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of Certificates of Registration as Category-II (Share Transfer Agent) given by SEBI (Delhi) during the last three years;

(b) the total number of cases rejected by the Board with the reasons of rejection thereof; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to improve the functioning and efficiency of SEBI (Delhi) Branch?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) and (b) SEBI has given the following details of registration of Category-II Share Transfer Agents by its Northern Regional Office:

Year	No. of Registration	No. of Renewals	No. of cases Rejected
1995-96	10	0	17
1996-97	12	0	20
1997-98	8	6	8
1998-99 (Upto 16.12.98)	1	1	0

The rejections were made for non compliance with the SEBI (Registrars to an issue and Share Transfer Agents) Rules and Regulations, 1993 by the applicants.

(c) Improvement in the functioning and efficiency of SEBI is a continuous process.

Development Commissioner for SSIs

3278. SHRI A.C. JOS: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government have turned the office of Development Commissioner into a redundant outfit and usurped all its powers in regulating the Industry;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the extent to which it has affected the small Scale Industries?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) In view of the above, the matter does not arise.

[*Translation*]

Handloom Industry Hank Yarn Production

3279. DR. CHINTA MOHAN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of share of handloom industry in the total textile manufactured, the percentage of employees in the handloom industry out of the total employees working in entire textile industry;

(b) whether the yarn manufacturing units have been issued orders to manufacture 50 percent of the total hank yarn production for smooth functioning of the handloom industry;

(c) whether the Government have recently changed the said order; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): (a) The production of handloom fabrics during 1997-98 is 7862 (provisional) million sq. mtrs. which comes to nearly 23% of the total cloth production in the country. The employment in the handloom sector is estimated at 124.00 lakh which is 58.44% of the total employment generated in the entire textile industry.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Export of Iron Ore by MMTC

3280. SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the quantum of iron ore exported by the Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation (MMTC) during the Eighth Five Year Plan and the amount of foreign exchange earned therefrom;

(b) whether the MMTC has laid emphasis on boosting export of iron ore during the Ninth Five Yer Plan;

(c) if so, the target fixed by the MMTC for export of iron ore and the achievements made during the Eighth Plan Period;

(d) the details of the countries to which iron ore is being exported at present; and

(e) the details of those countries with which agreements have been entered into for export of iron ore?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Sir, the quantum of Iron ore exported by MMTC during the eighth plan period 1992—97 and the foreign exchange earned thereon are as under:

Year	Quantity (Lakh Tonnes)	Value
1992-93	106.32	658.94
1993-94	106.06	632.60
1994-95	120.01	660.80
1995-96	111.46	685.40
1996-97	99.29	684.50

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Sir, the figures of the target fixed by MMTC and performance thereof during the Eight Five Year Plan are