

Official Secret Act

3912. SHRI DINSHAW PATEL :
SHRI SHANTILAL PURSHOTTAMDAS PATEL:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the former Justice of Supreme Court had stated that the Official Secret Act should be abolished;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government are considering the need to enact a Bill on freedom of information;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI) : (a) to (e) No specific information with reference to is available. However, a proposal relating to amendment section 5 of the Official Secrets Act, 1923, formulated by the Ministry of Home Affairs, was considered by the Group of Ministers alongwith the proposed draft on 'Right to Information Bill' prepared by the Department of Personnel and Training.

Further action on the lines of deliberations of the Group of Ministers is being taken.

FCI District

3913. SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO : Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Food Corporation of India had received a proposal to create a new F.C.I. District comprising the district of Kalahandi and Nuapara during 1993-94;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to create a new F.C.I. District for the backward region of Kalahandi and Nuapara?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYA PAL SINGH YADAV) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. A proposal to create a new FCI District at Kalahandi (Orissa) was received from Shri Bikram Keshari Deo, the then Member of Orissa Legislative Assembly on 16.1.94. The proposal was examined threadbare by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and it was found that the FCI activities in the District viz. storage capacity, procurement operations etc. did not justify for opening of a District Office due to heavy financial expenditure of recurring and non-recurring nature to be incurred per annum. The Hon'ble MLA was apprised of the position accordingly.

However, subsequently, a review was made of the situation and a Sub-Regional Office at Bhawanipatna in Kalahandi District (Orissa Region) was set up. This Sub-Regional Office covers the FCI Districts of Titlagarh, Jaypore, Behrampur. The Revenue District which fall under this Sub-Regional Office are:

- (1) Koraput
- (2) Ganjam
- (3) Phulbani
- (4) Kalahandi
- (5) Bolangir

Duty on Fertilizers

3914. SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA : Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the duty on fertilizers is too high;
- (b) if so, whether the farmers have requested to bring down the duty on fertilizers; and
- (c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (DR. A.K. PATEL)

- (a) There is no customs duty or excise duty on fertilizers.
- (b) and (c) Do not arise.

Protection of Life and property in Jammu & Kashmir

3915. VAIDYA VISHNU DATT : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps are being taken by the Union Government to protect the life and property of people living near the International Border and LOC in Jammu & Kashmir due to continuous firing by Pakistani Rangers/ troops;
- (b) whether the Government are putting up a barbed wire-fence along the border to check smuggling etc;
- (c) if so, the details of steps taken by the Government in this regard;
- (d) whether the families of victims have been suitably compensated in these areas;
- (e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) whether fertile agricultural land is being taken over by the Government for fencing the International Border in Jammu & Kashmir;

(g) if so, whether the peasants, Agriculturists/land owners have been given adequate compensation; and

(h) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI) : (a) Army and Security forces are maintaining constant vigil along the IB and LOC in J&K and appropriate action is being taken to counter the firing by Pakistan.

(b) and (c) However, to check infiltration and smuggling of arms and ammunition etc. through Jammu International Border, barbed wire fencing/flood lighting was contemplated, but due to firing from the Pakistan side, the work was stopped. The matter regarding re-starting of the work is under active consideration of the Government.

(d) and (e) The State Government provides ex-gratia relief to the families of those victims killed as per the standard norms prevalent in the state.

(f) No agricultural land has been taken over by the Government for fencing so far.

(g) and (h) The question does not arise.

[Translation]

Supply of Gas to Power Stations

3916. SHRI R.S. GAVAI : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Maharashtra has urged the Union Government for the allocation of more gas for the Gas Based Power Stations in the State;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Central Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government of Maharashtra has requested for an increase in allocation of gas from 3.5 MMSCMD to 4.5 MMSCMD to Maharashtra State Electricity Board.

(c) The gas projected to be available ex-Uran is far less than the commitments already made and it is not feasible to make further allocation at present.

Visit to Foreign Countries

3917. SHRIMATI SURYAKANTA PATIL : Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) the officers and staff of the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers visited abroad during the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the main purposes of their foreign visits and the amount involved therein;

(d) whether the Ministry had accorded permission to them for the visits; and

(e) if not, the action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (DR. A.K. PATEL) : (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Use of Fake Currency by ISI

3918. SHRI DATTA MEGHE:
SHRI SURESH CHANDEL :
PROF. CHAMAN LAL GUPTA :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether ISI of Pakistan is circulating fake currency notes in the country and making payments to terrorists/subversives through fake Indian currency with a motive to jeopardise the economy of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the number of persons arrested during the last three years till date and the action taken against them;

(c) whether any person has been found printing fake currency notes;

(d) if so, the value of currency recovered and the action taken against the accused persons; and

(e) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Union Government to check such activities of ISI?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI) : (a) to (c) Circulation/seizure of fake Indian currency has come to notice in some parts of the country. However, involvement of Pak ISI in such cases has not yet been confirmed.

In 1996, 2 persons were arrested in Gujarat and 4 in Rajasthan; in 1997, 4 persons each were arrested in Gujarat as well as Rajasthan respectively, while in 1998, 4 persons were arrested in Gujarat in connection with seizure of fake currency.

(d) The value of fake currency detected by the Reserve Bank of India and seized by the Police during the last 3 years stood at Rs. 14,94,996.

(e) In order to combat counterfeiting, various measures have been taken. Currency notes are now