

*[English]***Free Treatment Facilities to Poor People in AIIMS**

2087. SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of poor people suffering from ailments of kidney, cancer, heart and intestine visit All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi for their treatment everyday;

(b) if so, whether these people receive some financial assistance from the Prime Minister's and the Health Minister's Relief Fund but they die due to meagre means to bear the expenditure of treatment;

(c) if so, whether the Government have formulated any scheme to provide free treatment to the poorest suffering from the said ailments; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Financial assistance upto a maximum of Rs. 20,000/- (Rupees twenty thousand) is provided to poor and needy patients who apply for financial assistance out of Health Minister's Discretionary Grant to partly defray the expenditure on specialised treatment/costly surgical operations for undergoing treatment/operation in any hospitals anywhere in India. The Central Government has also set up a National Illness Assistance Fund and formulated guidelines to provide financial assistance for medical treatment of persons living below poverty line and suffering from major life threatening disease. All the States/UTs have similarly been advised to set up Illness Assistance Funds. It has also been decided that grant-in-aid from Central Government would be released to each of these States/UTs where Funds are set up on the line advised to them. In the Casualty of AIIMS, all patients are treated free of cost including Procedures and Investigations. Financial help is provided to poor patients from 'AIIMS Poor Fund' to purchase medicines, etc. There is a provision for exemption of hospital charges for indigent patients.

Misuse of Consumer Protection Act, 1986

2088. SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Medical Association (IMA), has written to the Government over the misuse of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 (CPA) resulting in irreparable damage to the reputation of doctors/hospitals and called for setting up of a screening body consisting of medical and legal experts to ascertain whether a prima-facie case of negligence exists;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the present status of the proposal regarding the proposed amendments to Consumer Protection Act, 1986 in the light of experience gained so far; and

(d) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The Indian Medical Association has suggested the following measures:

(i) Creation of an autonomous Accrediation Body to give rating to Hospitals as per the facilities they offer.

(ii) A screening body of medical and legal experts at all levels of Consumer Courts be established to investigate whether *prima-facie* case of negligence by a doctor/hospital exists or not.

(iii) In case an allegation is not proved in a Consumer Court, the complainant should pay to the medical professional/hospital 50% of the amount he claimed.

(iv) The I.M.A. has suggested that an upper limit of claim in terms of human suffering and loss may be made.

(c) and (d) All services, if rendered for any consideration have been covered under the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986. Two years ago the Hon'ble Supreme Court had upheld the provisions of the Act in its judgement in Civil Appeal No 688 of 1993. To make it more effective and purposeful, the Consumer Protection Act has been amended in 1991 and 1993.

Shortage of IPS Officers

2089. SHRI SATNAM SINGH KAINTH: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is shortage of IPS officers in various States in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to fill the vacant posts of IPS officers?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI) : (a) and (b) As on 1.1.98, the Total Authorised Cadre Strength of all IPS Cadres is 3442 and against this 3111 IPS officers are in position.

(c) 84 officers are likely to join the IPS from 1997 Civil Services Examination. 136 officers are likely to get into IPS by way of promotion from State Police Service in 1998. The induction into the IPS is planned taking the vacancies into account.