

## LOK SABHA DEBATES

### LOK SABHA

Thursday, April 12, 1990/Chaitra 22 1912  
(Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

#### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

#### Corruption Cases in Regional Passport Offices at Delhi, Chandigarh and Jalandar

431. SHRI KAMAL CHAUDHRY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there have been complaints about corruption in the Regional Passport Offices at Delhi, Chandigarh and Jalandar;

(b) if so, the number of such cases during 1987, 1988 and 1989;

(c) the number of officials involved in such complaints; and

(d) the action taken by Government against them?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) to (d). A statement is laid on the table of the House.

#### STATEMENT

(a) and (b). A total of 26 complaints of corruption were received in the Ministry about these Passport Offices from 1987 to 1989, viz.,

Sl. No.	Passport Office	1987	1988	1989
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Chandigarh	1	3	2
2.	Delhi	1	3	3
3.	Jalandhar	4	8	1

(c) (i) 4 complaints were regarding corruption in general but not against any

specific officials in the three Passport Offices. The break-up is as under:

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Passport Office</i>	<i>1987</i>	<i>1988</i>	<i>1989</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
1.	Chandigarh	0	0	0
2.	Delhi	1	0	1
3.	Jalandhar	1	1	0

(ii) Break up of officials named specifically in 22 complaints is given below:

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Passport Offices</i>	<i>1987</i>	<i>1988</i>	<i>1989</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
1.	Chandigarh	1	3	2
2.	Delhi	0	6	2
3.	Jalandhar	6	2	2

(d) The Government looked into the complaints and found that the charges against the officials could not be proved.

**SHRI KAMAL CHAUDHRY:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, the passport for an Indian is like an identity card which gives his photograph, his place and date of birth and also his local address. But to get this identity card, an Indian citizen has to run around for years together and he has to grease the palms of officers starting from a Chowkidar in these offices. Unfortunately, the complaints as given in the reply have been only 26 in three years (1987, 1988 and 1989) and only 4 complaints which do not mention any officials in particular. So, may I know from the hon. Minister whether he would send some flying squads or adopt any other system by which these corruption cases are reduced and finally eliminated?

**SHRI I.K. GUJRAL:** Sir, from time to time, surprise checks are being made and as a matter of fact, I have done it myself also in Bombay for instance. Another thing we are trying to do is that we are thinking of appointing advisory committees of public men in

every station so that they are able to entertain the complaints.

**SHRI KAMAL CHAUDHRY:** Sir, it is important for the Government to provide this identity card (Pass Port) at the shortest possible time. As far as allowing a person to go to a particular country, that is the visa requirement is concerned, it is for that Government to decide whether this person should be allowed to enter that country. It is an important function. May I know from the hon. Minister whether he has any concrete proposal for streamlining and simplifying this system and especially full computerisation of these offices?

**SHRI I.K. GUJRAL:** I think, passport is not an identity card. I think, we should be very clear about it. All citizens do not have the passports. Therefore, it is not a substitute for the identity card.

**SHRI KAMAL CHAUDHRY:** Many individuals want to procure passport. They should not be stopped from getting it. When he goes abroad, it becomes like an identity card.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: If he uses it as an identity card, there is no objection. But I think, that is no substitute for an identity card.

So far as issuance of passport speedily is concerned, the main difficulty is police verification. It takes much longer time than it should. Now I am discussing this with my colleague, the Home Minister. The proposal is that within three weeks, if the report is not received, we should automatically issue the passport. Once we eliminate this delay, it is better. We are also discussing at the moment, with the Home Minister whether we should authorise the Members of Parliament to verify if they agree, and give verification. When we did it earlier, some Members of Parliament came back and said, "No, do not give this responsibility to us; it is very difficult to discharge."

Any how, I am taking personal interest in this to see that the passport is issued without delay. This is the only Wing which deals with the public in my Ministry. I am trying to streamline it.

[*Translation*]

PROF. PREM KUMAR DHUMAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the reply to part of the question, it has been stated that the Government looked into the complaints and the charges against the officials could not be proved. There was great hue and cry about the rampant corruption. As such the hon. Minister should tell us whether only departmental enquiry was conducted or some cases have been referred to C.B.I. also so as to detect corruption cases.

[*English*]

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: In the statement, it has been said that the cases have been referred to CBI also.

PROF. K.V. THOMAS: The undue delay in getting the passport is due to two reasons. One is the police verification. Police verifications are done at two stages—by the local police and the Intelligence in the State po-

lice. If the verification is done by the local police only, the report can be given in a speedier manner.

Second thing is, you have instructions from your Ministry that after the police verification report has come to the Passport office, within 41 days, the passport should be issued. But in Cochin, which is my constituency, for the last three months, they did not issue the passport even after getting the police verification. One problem is, there is no adequate staff. We are very happy that the staff in the passport office are working hard, are sitting day and night and on Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays. But passport could not be issued in respect of all the pending applications. You have to give adequate staff. That is why, corruption charges come. I would like to know whether you will send the application for enquiry only to the local police and not to the Intelligence in the State police, and whether adequate staff will be provided.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: The points made by the hon. Member are well taken. I am absolutely in agreement with him that we are under-staffed. Unfortunately there is a rule now that no new post can be created. Since Passport office is a revenue earning Department, we are in touch with the Finance Ministry to permit us to create more posts because we are under-staffed. Cochin is one of such offices. I had been to Trivandrum myself and had seen it that the strain was too much. That is why, we will do something.

So far as getting the report from the local police only is concerned, the point is well taken and I will examine it.

[*Translation*]

SHRIMATI JAYAWANTINAVINCHANDRA MEHTA: May I know as to how many officers were involved in the corruption cases which were enquired into and, whether these officers had links with any travelling agency and what is the total amount involved in the bungling by these officers.

[English]

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: Well, I would not be able to reply it straightaway. But we will give you the information.

[Translation]

SHRI OHHAVIRAM ARGAL: Hon. Speaker, Sir, people have to face a lot of difficulties due to verifications made in connection with passports. People have to visit passport office several times. It takes a lot of time. To obviate this difficulty, Janata Government had authorised the M.P.s and M.L.As. to give verification certificate but it has since been diluted. Will Government take steps to simplify the procedure for issue of passport so that the people may get the same easily?

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Member has rightly said that the people have to face difficulties and we are trying to remedy the situation. I agree that verification by M.P's and M.L.A.s would be more fruitful. Unfortunately, when people started approaching them, Members themselves stated that many people, whom they cannot refuse, approach them to obtain their signatures.

MR. SPEAKER: Please don't start it again.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: Thus we were faced with a dilemma. In the meantime, terrorism increased and more attention had to be paid to it. Otherwise I am of the opinion that passport is the right of every citizen and he must get it.

[English]

SHRI YADVENDRA DATT: The hon. Minister has just now in his answer said that he has talked with the Home Minister to find out the way to expedite matters during the police investigation. I would like to know whether he has come to any conclusion by which system that the police investigation takes minimum time and the man who

demand the passport gets his passport earlier.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: One of the things which has been agreed in the informal discussions is that if the police report does not come back within three weeks, then Passport Officer is authorised to presume that the police has investigated.

SHRI ANIL SHASTRI: We have to examine one fact. If it is difficult to obtain a passport, this gives rise to corruption. One way is to increase the number of Regional Passport Offices. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to how many Regional Passport Offices are there at present and if the Government is contemplating to increase the number of passport offices in India.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: At the moment, we have 22 Offices. There are some suggestions. Probably one or two more hon. Members have given suggestions which are under consideration positively. We are looking very sympathetically and see about the funds and the finances in those respects. I quite agree and totally agree with my hon. friend that we should expedite the system and see that the citizens are not harassed.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY: My experience is that the wrong kind of people at times get passport very quickly. But then the deserving people who require it very urgently are harassed many times and they do not know how to get the passport. They come to the MPs. The students who have to go abroad for studies have very little time to stand in queue to get passport and arrange for the visa and all that. They desperately come to the M.P.s. They get the passport at our intervention. If there are people who ought to get passport very quickly and if they do not know any M.P., then how will they be helped by the Government? I would like to know this.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: As I submitted just now, we are setting up Advisory Committees at every Centre and they will comprise of MP also the local MLA also so that they will be

effective places where people can go and complain if they are in difficulty.

### Construction of Godowns

\*432. DR. A.K. PATEL:  
SHRI PYARELAL KHANDEL-  
WAL:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating construction of a network of godowns in the country to prevent distress sale of farm products; and

(b) if so, the outlines of the proposal?

[Translation]

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI DEVI LAL): (a) The provision of a country-wide network of godowns forms part of the Action Plan announced by the Government of India on the 1st January, 1990.

(b) Following the announcement of the Action Plan, the status of warehousing facilities available in the country and storage requirements of different agricultural commodities along with other related issues of infrastructure for marketing of agricultural produce were examined in detail. In order to have optimum utilisation of the existing capacities and to create new capacities required, the State Governments have been requested to make detailed surveys and identify the gaps. These exercises would help in proper prioritisation and effective implementation of the existing scheme, which has been in operation since 1979 in collaboration with the State Governments.

[English]

DR. A.K. PATEL: The farmers do not get remunerative prices and they are subject to difficulties often. I congratulate the hon. Minister for providing facilities for the sur-

rounding countries. I would like to know from the hon. Minister how many godowns will be constructed State-wise and the *modus operandi* for it.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVI LAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government has constructed many warehouses and godowns for the storage of foodgrains so that farmers may get remunerative price of their produce. 446 godowns have been constructed in Andhra Pradesh for which assistance of Rs. 2 crore and 67 lakh has been given by the Central Government. There are 10 godowns in Assam having capacity of 25,000 metric tonnes for which an assistance of Rs. 66 lakh has been provided by the Centre. There are 156 godowns in Bihar for which assistance of Rs. 1 crore 64 lakh has been granted by the Centre. 5 godowns are in Goa where assistance of Rs. 9 lakh has been granted by the Centre. Gujarat has 866 godowns for which Rs. 4 crore 70 lakh have been provided by the Centre. In Haryana there are 65 godowns for which Centre has given assistance of Rs. 11 lakh. There are 29 godowns in Kerala for which Rs. 52 lakh have been given by the Centre. The number of godowns in Karnataka is 446 for which Rs. 2 crore 10 lakh have been provided by the Central Government. Madhya Pradesh has 468 godowns and assistance provided by the Government is Rs. 2 crore 35 lakh. The number of godowns in Maharashtra is 828.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Patel, do you want to know the details of godowns in all the States?

SHRI DEVI LAL: But I want to furnish this information so that members coming from different states may know the arrangements being made by this Government. There are 20 godowns in Mizoram for which Rs. 20 lakh have been provided by the Centre. 137 godowns are in Orissa for which an assistance of Rs. 78 lakh has been given by the Centre. There are 138 godowns in Rajasthan for which an assistance of Rs. 67 lakh has been granted. 17 godowns are in Sikkim