

Chemical Disasters

*116. SHRI H.N. NANJE GOWDA:
SHRI SHANTILAL PATEL:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Union Government have taken adequate precautionary measures for meeting any future major chemical disasters like the Bhopal gas tragedy;

(b) if so, the concrete steps taken by Government in this regard;

(c) the details of chemical disasters that have occurred after Bhopal gas tragedy; and

(d) the action taken by Government in each case?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z.R. ANSARI): (a) to (d). 1. The Parliament enacted the Environment (Protection) Act, in 1986 which provides for management of hazardous substances and for laying down procedures and safeguards in this regard. Following this, the Government have taken several steps to deal with major chemical disasters which include the following:

- (i) The draft rules for notification and handling of hazardous and toxic chemicals have been prepared by the Ministry.
- (ii) A Hazardous Substances Management Division has been set up in the Ministry.
- (iii) A crisis management plan has been prepared to deal with chemical emergencies with a three-tier system, namely, a Central Crisis Group, State level Crisis Group or Coordination Committee and District level Crisis Group.
- (iv) The Central Crisis Group has already been constituted.

Thirteen States and one Union Territory have set up Co-ordination Committees.

- (v) Eighteen States and Union Territories have identified hazardous chemical industries within their jurisdiction. The 'on-site' and 'off-site' emergency plans have been prepared.
- (vi) Financial assistance has been provided to 13 States during this financial year to equip them with manpower and laboratory facilities.
- (vii) An effective communication system has been set up for co-ordinated action in case of a major chemical disaster with a Control Room working in the Ministry of Environment and Forests.
- (viii) The people living around the hazardous units will be sensitized by information and training so that they will be in a position to meet an emergency or accident.

2. There has not been any major chemical disaster after the Bhopal gas tragedy. However, some chemical accidents have been reported from some States. The action taken by the State Governments in this regard includes prosecution and closure of concerned industrial units.

[Translation]

Exemption to Khadi and Village Industries Commission from Purview of Labour Laws

*117. SHRIMATI VIDYAVATI CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Khadi and Village Industries Commission has demanded exemption from the purview of the Labour