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Selling of Methanol by Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers, Bombay

*234. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL:

SHRI RAM SINGH YADAV:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the manufacturing source of the methanol used in the killer brew, which took a toll of 325 lives in Bangalore (Karnataka) recently, has been traced to the Bombay-based public sector undertaking, Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers;

(b) is this methanol sold by this Company to licensed and non-licensed dealers in Bombay and outside;

(c) what precaution is taken by the Company to prevent its finding way to outside cities through agents and bootleggers; and

(d) whether there exist any restrictions on its supply for unauthorised and illicit purposes and how its sale is regulated to obviate such illegal use by unscrupulous persons?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI P. C. SETHI): (a) to (d). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The investigating officers of the Bangalore police asked the Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers whether they had sold methanol to a particular party in Bombay. RCF confirmed that they had. RCF have reported that this party holds valid licences under the Petroleum Act, 1934 to store methanol and under the Poisons Act, 1919 to sell methanol.

(b) RCF sells methanol only to consumers and dealers holding valid appropriate licences. RCF have not sold methanol to any non-licensed dealer in Bombay or outside.

(c) and (d). Licences are required under the Petroleum Act, 1934 and rules made thereunder for storage and transport of methanol. In States where methanol is included in the list of poisons, a licence is required under the Poisons Act, 1919 by resellers of methanol. In States where methanol comes under the purview of the Prohibition and Excise Rules, licences are prescribed under those

rules also. The responsibility for enforcing the provisions of these laws is with the concerned State Governments. According to the provisions of the Petroleum Rules, 1976, RCF are required to confirm that all of their customers are in possession of valid and appropriate licences for storage of methanol. This requirement is scrupulously observed by RCF. Though not so required under the other Acts, RCF also verify that the purchasers of methanol from them do hold, where required, valid licences under the Poisons Act, Prohibition and Excise Act and Rules etc.

Top posts in public sector undertakings lying vacant

*235. SHRI CHHOTAY SINGH YADAV: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of top posts in various public sector undertakings under his Ministry have been lying vacant for long;

(b) if so, details thereof stating the period for which these posts have been lying vacant and its effect on the functioning of the undertakings; and

(c) reasons for not filling up these vacancies so far?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI A.B.A. GHANI KHAN CHAUDHURY):

(a) to (c). Two posts of chief executives of undertakings under this Ministry are being looked after under dual charge arrangements, since 13-6-1980 and 1-4-1981. The work has not suffered in any of the undertakings on this account. The selection of permanent incumbents for these posts would be finalised shortly.

In respect of one other post, orders appointing a permanent incumbent have been issued on 31-8-1981.

Promotion and preservation of folk culture

*237. SHRI R. P. DAS: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken by Government for the promotion and preservation of the folk culture so far; and

(b) whether his Department has any scheme for filming the famous folk dances of Bengal?

THE MINISTER FOR INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) and (b). A Statement is laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha.

Statement

Promotion and preservation of folk culture is one of the themes which receives Government support in various forms. The Sangeet Natak Akademi and the Lalit Kala Akademi under the Ministry of Education & Culture are striving for the promotion and preservation of folk performing arts which are a part of folk culture. Sangeet Natak Akademi implements the following schemes for preservation and promotion of folk performing arts:

(i) documentation, archival collection and dissemination;

(ii) preservation and promotion of rare forms of performing arts;

(iii) preservation and promotion of puppetry;

(iv) documentation of tribal culture.

Assistance has also been given over the years to various cultural organisations which are engaged in training, research and development in these areas.

2. The Lalit Kala Akademi has a scheme for the survey of folk, traditional and tribal art. In the recent past, the Akademi has conducted surveys of Warli Art in Maharashtra, Molela terracottas in Rajasthan, Pithora Paintings and is working on Folk and