

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : So far as the bonds issued by the Telecommunication Department are concerned, the Department has issued them. The details of those bonds are available in the administrative Ministry, namely, the Telecommunication Department. So, the Hon. Member can put the question to the concerned Department. So far as non-resident's right to invest in these bonds is concerned, I require a notice for this.

[Translation]

Seizure of gold from smugglers

*289. **SHRI KAMLA PRASAD RAWAT :** Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the total value of gold seized from smugglers in January and February, 1987;

(b) since when these smugglers have been engaged in smuggling gold into country;

(c) whether these smugglers have links with foreign smugglers; and

(d) if so, the action taken to check smuggling of gold ?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : (a) to (d). A statement is given below.

Statement

(a) During the months of January and February, 1987, contraband gold worth Rs. 11.75 crores (provisional) was seized under the Customs Act throughout the country.

(b) Gold continues to be sensitive to smuggling into the country due to its traditional demand and restricted supplies. As it is a clandestine activity, it is not possible to specify the period from which it commenced.

(c) In cases of organised smuggling, it is found that the local smugglers have links with persons abroad.

(d) The anti-smuggling machinery throughout the country particularly in vulnerable areas of sea coast, land border region and international airports remain alert to check and detect smuggling of gold into the country. Sophisticated anti-smuggling equipments such as metal detectors, baggage X-ray machines, C.C.T.Vs are utilised for prevention and detection of gold concealed on person of passengers and their baggage/in-cargo. Close co-ordination is maintained with all concerned agencies in the prevention and detection of gold smuggling into the country.

[Translation]

SHRI KAMLA PRASAD RAWAT : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Hon. Minister's reply is very general and it does not disclose the names of guilty persons. The smuggling activity is increasing and gold worth Rs. 92 lakh has been seized this March. Are some officers also involved in this smuggling ?

[English]

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : Sir, this question relates to the seizures that have been made in the year 1987. The number of seizures made and also the worth of the gold that has been seized has been mentioned. So far as the involvement of the officers and other detailed particulars of the carriers and the smugglers are concerned, these are not available now. We have to get those details. Because it is relating to January-February, that detailed information we are not yet having.

[Translation]

SHRI KAMLA PRASAD RAWAT : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to know the strong action taken against big smugglers in order to check smuggling and the steps taken by Government against the foreign smugglers involved in this racket ?

[English]

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : Sir, the number of persons arrested in the year 1986 was 2,788, the number of persons prosecuted was 2,505 and the number of persons convicted in the year 1986 was 870. Apart from that, we have detained the cars

riers and smugglers under the COFEPOSA Act also. So far in various smuggling activities we have detained... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL VYAS : How many have been detained under COFEPOSA ?

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : 582 persons were in actual detention under the COFEPOSA Act, as on 28.2.87.

MR. SPEAKER : Without even my permission you are answering to him, and that too while he is sitting.

SHRI E. AYYAPU REDDY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it has been estimated by a very responsible journal that about 75 to 80 tonnes of gold is being smuggled into India every year. Previously when it was brought to the notice of the Hon. Finance Minister, he stated that the gold policy is under review. Gold smuggling has become quite common because the disparity in price is about Rs. 1,000 per tola. Every passenger is tempted to get something by way of gold. Therefore, the gold policy requires a review and that is what the Hon. Finance Minister had previously stated on the floor of this House. Has any Committee been constituted to review this gold policy and is the Government of India thinking of importing gold to meet the local needs ?

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : Sir, a committee under Dr. Rangarajan has been constituted and they are going into all the aspects of the gold policy.. (*Interruptions*).

MR. SPEAKER : Have you got any objection to that also ?

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : There is no proposal on the part of the Government to import gold to meet the internal demand.

SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU : Sir, gold smuggling is growing everyday and day by day.

PROF. N. G. RANGA : Every year or everyday ?

SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU : So far the Government has found out 582 persons

and they have seized gold worth Rs. 11.75 crores. My question is that smuggling of gold is being done in different ways. Recently also I read in papers that after completely shaving the head, inside the wig some gold was smuggled—more than three or four kilos...

MR. SPEAKER : They put it somewhere else also.

SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU : Now, checking is being done at the airport and at other customs points. Sir, though checking is being done at the customs points in respect of different parts of the body of a person, the same is not done in the case of the head. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister whether such a procedure of checking the head will be done in future.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : Sir, sophisticated anti-smuggling equipments such as metal detectors, baggage screening machines are utilised for prevention of the smuggling and the suggestion of the Hon. Member that the head should also be thoroughly checked will be considered. It is already being done and further information will be given.

[*Translation*]

SHRI ANAND SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to ask a question regarding smuggling activities. It is true that many smugglers has been arrested under COFEPOSA, etc. but recently a notorious smuggler, Haji Mastan, has been touring Uttar Pradesh and holding public meetings in different districts and he has been granted permission to hold such meetings. I want to know whether the Central Government has been informed about it and if so, whether any efforts have been made to inquire as to why he has been permitted to hold meetings in various places and what are his intentions behind such meetings ? An amount of Rs. 6 lakhs was also recovered while it was being secretly taken away by them in a gunny bag.

[*English*]

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : The Government of India cannot prevent any Indian citizen moving from one place

to another and holding public meetings. But if there is any evidence to show that anti-smuggling activities are indulged in, definitely action will be taken. Nobody will be spared. But unless we have evidence, we cannot take any action against them.

SHRI HAROQBHAI MEHTA : Under the Gold Control legislation, the accused are often bailed out by court orders and even in COFEPOSA, a number of detenues are released by court orders. Keeping this in view, and giving serious thought to the question, may I know whether the Government will consider it necessary to plug the loopholes in the relevant criminal law as well as detention law ?

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : We have plugged the loopholes in the Act. Not only that. We are looking into all the aspects and we are monitoring it very effectively. So far as loopholes are concerned, if at all there is any need for plugging them—since you have brought it to our notice—definitely we will examine it.

Cleaning Yamuna river

+

*290. **SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK :**
SHRI SHANTI DHARIWAL :

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

(a) whether Government have formulated any scheme to clean Yamuna river on the lines of Ganga cleaning project;

(b) the details of the scheme;

(c) the time by which the cleaning up operations of Yamuna will start; and

(d) the places identified so far ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI) : (a) Proposals for cleaning of the Yamuna are being considered.

(b) to (d). Details are being worked out.

SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK : Sir, if you see the answer for part (a) to part (d) of my question, somehow or other I find that the Hon. Minister does not want to give the picture of the schemes. But earlier he has already said about the schemes. It has appeared in the Times of India dated 14th that the Minister has said in Parliamentary Consultative Committee that action on cleaning up the Yamuna has already been started at Triveni and Allahabad. He has already stated that the operation to clean up Yamuna will begin soon at Faridabad, Delhi, Mathura, Brindavan and Agra Sir, what I wanted to know is whether a scheme will be formulated on the line of Ganga which has not been included in the plan at present and the reply to parts (b) to (d) is that details are being worked out. I would like the Government to enlighten us by giving details along with the total cost of the project, the date regarding the starting of the project and completion of the project, etc.

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI : We are very much concerned about the cleaning up of Yamuna River and other Rivers also. The position is like this that as far as a project on the lines of Ganga is concerned, I may point out that the Ganga is a special project and a special authority has been established for cleaning the Ganga. But for the Yamuna, no such authority has been established. As far as procedure adopted to clean the Ganga is concerned, we are taking steps. We have consulted the State Governments. And we have directed the State Governments and the Union Territory of Delhi to formulate certain schemes for cleaning Yamuna river and making Yamuna free of pollution.

SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK : What about the cost of the project ?

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI : There is no project as such. We have asked them to formulate certain schemes and some of the State Governments have indicated them. Recently a meeting was taken by the Minister for Environment and Forests where the Minister from U.P., the Minister from Haryana and the Executive Councillor of Delhi were present and they had indicated rough estimates for cleaning Yamuna and