

[25 February, 2000] RAJYA SABHA

year 1999, fake Indian currency of Rs. 84,600/- was seized in 12 cases and during the year 2000 (upto 15.2.2000), fake currency to the tune of Rs. 1,38,000/- has been seized in 6 cases.

(c) No specific demand has been received by the Ministry of Railways.

(d) Does not arise.

National Working Group for Bio-Tech Industry

‡290. DR. GOPALRAO VITHALRAO PAUL: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the All India Bio-tech Association (AIBA) has requested the Central Government to set up a National Working Group for the bio-tech industry, on the pattern of the information industry, in view of this sector still being undeveloped and the scope for development therein; and

(b) if so, what is Government's response to the said, demand?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT): (a) and (b) Government has not received any proposal from the All India Biotech Association (AIBA) to set up a National Working Group for the biotech industry. However, many promotional measures have already been taken to promote biotechnology. A biotechnology consortium functions as an interface between academia and industry. An expert task force of Department of Biotechnology also takes up proposals for biotechnology product and process development.

Original Research in Science Institutions

‡291. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that no original research is being carried out due to political interference and personal rivalries among the Indian Researcher Community and not even fifty percent targets have been achieved during the last decade, as reported in a prominent journal, Science;

‡Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether it is also a fact that younger generation is getting indifferent towards science;

(c) whether there is no proper arrangement to monitor the functioning of scientific institutions; and

(d) if so, what steps are being taken by Government to bring Indian Science and Technology out of this mess?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) The Government have always placed high emphasis on improving the standards of Research & Development activities in the Academic sector as well as in the National laboratories. The S&T institutions have flexibility in their functioning and have their own Research Councils and Governing bodies to provide guidance and monitoring. There has been an increase in support to S&T in successive Plans for pursuing R&D efforts through the various S&T Departments/agencies including the socio-economic Ministries. There are several programmes to support Young Scientists and several new initiatives have recently been taken. For example: Kishore Vaigyanik Protsahan Yojana, Swarnajayanti Fellowships, Biotechnology Fellowships, Summer Research Fellowships through National & International Programmes, Fellowships under Better Opportunities for Young Scientists in Chosen Areas of Science & Technology (BOYSCAST) programme, Integrated Science Olympiad Programme -Fast Track Proposal for Young Scientists, and Fund for Improvement of Infrastructure for R&D in Universities and other higher educational institutions (FIST).

The House then adjourned at six minutes past eleven of the clock till eleven of the clock on Monday, the 28th February, 2000.