

maintained by the courts at various stages in the disposal of these petitions.

- (xiii) Empowering the Election Commission to make certain recommendations to the appropriate authority for referring any matter for investigation to an agency specified by it for prosecution of any person for an electoral offence and for appointment of any special court for the trial thereof.
- (xiv) Declaration at the time of filing nomination paper by the candidate in respect of assets owned by him, his spouse, relatives etc. and charges, if any, framed against him on affidavit.
- (xv) Stability in governance—(A) no seat for a party having obtained less than five per cent of total valid votes even if it wins any seat at an election—a new definition of political party in the Tenth Schedule which includes a pre-election front/coalition-restriction on no-confidence motion, in particular requiring the motion to be accompanied by another motion expressing confidence in a named individual as also no fresh no-confidence motion to be permitted within a period of two years.
- (B) Passing references to one election in five years and fixed term for legislative bodies but no final recommendations made.

Increase in the strength of Supreme Court Judges

1322. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) what is the strength of Supreme Court bench as on date;
- (b) how many Judges of the Supreme Court belong to SC/ST and Minority Sikh Community;
- (c) whether there is any proposal to increase the strength of Supreme Court Judges; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI RAM JETHMALANI): (a) and (b) As on

December 9, 1999, there were 23 Judges in position in the Supreme Court of India against its sanctioned strength of 26 Judges.

Appointment of Judges of the Supreme Court is made under article 124 of the Constitution of India which does not provide for reservation for any caste or class of persons. Therefore, no information is maintained separately for caste or class, etc.

- (c) No, Sir.
- (d) Does not arise.

Higher Pay and longer working hours for Judicial Officers

1323. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem captioned "Higher pay, longer working hours for judicial officers mooted" as reported in the Times of India dated 12th November, 1999;

(b) if so, whether the National Judicial Pay Commission has recommended higher pay scales and additional working hours to clear the backlog of cases in judiciary;

(c) if so, the reaction of Government thereto; and

(d) what other steps Government propose to take to clear the cases expeditiously?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI RAM JETHMALANI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Report of the first National Judicial Pay Commission relates to the subordinate judiciary which is primarily the concern of the State Governments/High Courts. The Commission has sent its recommendations to the Central Government, State Government, UT Administrations and High Courts. The recommendations are under examination in so far as they relate to the Central Government,

(d) The Government has taken various measures to expedite disposal of cases. These measures include, inter alia, amendment of the Civil Procedure Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure,