

or twelve times, I am ready to discuss it with the hon. Member and find out what is practicable. Let us not do it now so that nobody registers for it. I can have his views incorporated in the scheme.

*42. [The questioner (Shri S. S. Ahluwalia) was absent. For answer vide col. 34-35 infra.]

Fake passport rackets

†43. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA:
SHRI SARADA MOHANTY:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that fake passport rackets are on the increase;

(b) what are the details of fake passport cases unearthed at various international air-ports of the country; and

(c) whether persons involved in these criminal acts have been prosecuted and punished; if so, what is their number during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI M. M. JACOB): (a), (b) and (c) The information is being collected from States and will be laid on the Table of the House.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Sir, in fact, this being a very sensitive issue and in view of the terrorism and other things happening in the country, I thought that some details might come because here, the State Home Ministries are not involved. The question relates to regional passport offices which are under the control of the Central Government. The External Affairs Ministry and the Home Ministry can correlate with

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Chimanbhai Mehta.

them. I can understand if you are going to give an exhaustive annual report when we may wait.

MR. CHAIRMAN: They want to give the correct and full details. That is what they are doing. You must appreciate.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: I do appreciate that they are going to give it. But they can give at least some details which were available in newspapers. I have not quoted the name of the newspaper.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You put your question.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Therefore, I am asking the Government whether they know the *modus operandi*, whether they know how this racket is going on, whether the photographs are changed and whether the regional passport offices are involved and collaborating. On these vital issues, I am asking this question.

SHRI M. M. JACOB: Sir, in my reply, I have said that information is being collected from various States. The External Affairs Ministry is in charge of the regional passport offices. And as soon as a crime is detected and registered, it is the respective State Governments which would pursue the matter. In this context, we have to collect information from various States to be appropriate. That is why I gave the assurance in the beginning that it would be collected and furnished.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Have you any information that some Regional Passport Officers are also involved in this fake passport business? That is his question.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Yes.

SHRI M. M. JACOB: I do not have any information at present about that.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: I have read it in a newspaper some days back. I am not able to give the date.

It was about Punjab, Chandigarh. It was said that from the Regional Passport Office fake passports emanated and they were misused by them. This is a very sensitive matter and therefore, my attention was drawn to this particular thing. Photographs can also be changed. The signature would be kept. But the photograph and that part of the signature would be added so that the whole thing could be manipulated. This is the way. In fact, a detailed description was given in 'The Hindustan Times'. And therefore, I think that your attention must have been drawn to that matter immediately. My question is related to that. Therefore, if you can give some information, if you can throw some light, saying, 'this is the way they are doing it', then the State authorities might be alerted on this point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: His specific question is about Chandigarh in relation to the news appearing in 'The Hindustan Times'. What steps have you taken in that direction?

SHRI M. M. JACOB: Sir, the suggestion is well taken. This will be passed on to the External Affairs Ministry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He says that 'The Hindustan Times' news was that the Chandigarh office was involved in it, the two were doing it together. Then it becomes your jurisdiction to take care of the whole thing so that this does not happen. Whoever is involved, an employee of the passport office is not exempt from the Home Ministry.

SHRI M. M. JACOB: Sir, as I said, the information will be passed on to the External Affairs Ministry and I request the Member also to furnish information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Wait a minute. That is what I am telling you. If a person is involved in this type of action, they do not come into the picture. If any employee of the External Affairs Ministry is doing an illegal thing, you do not have to consult the External Affairs Ministry even. You take action. It is an illegal act. It is punishable. That is what is asking. I am only explaining what he said.

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIR (SHRI S. B. CHAVAN): Sir, I quite appreciate that if any employee of the Government of India is involved in doing any illegal thing, then, certainly, the Home Ministry will come into the picture. There is no doubt about that. But at least I must have all the information as to who the people are who are involved in this. Certainly we will find it out from the External Affairs Ministry and thereafter, if any action is called for, we will take it.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: It has come in newspapers. It has been published in newspapers. (Interruptions). Sir, the Home Ministry cannot skip responsibility on this matter. If the Member is asking the question on the basis of a newspaper report, how can the Ministry of Home Affairs say they are ignorant?

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN: If that be the case, will the hon. Member take the responsibility that what has appeared in the newspaper is definitely correct? If you were to say that ... (Interruptions).

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: This is unfair. (Interruption).

MR. CHAIRMAN: If a Member brings to our notice that this has appeared in the newspaper, normally it is expected that what appears in the newspaper should be looked into. Everything that appears in the newspaper need not be correct, but it makes us think in that direction. (Interruption).

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: The Minister should at least give an assurance. He should stand up and give an assurance in this matter. This matter should go to the Assurance Committee also.

श्री सभापति आपकी बात तो मैंने कह दी ।

SHRI M. M. JACOB: I have already given an assurance that it will be looked into.

SHRI SARADA MOHANTY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to know whether any complaint is pending against any official in respect of the fake passport racket in the Home Ministry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there any case pending in the Home Ministry? Do you have any information or you are collecting it?

SHRI M. M. JACOB: There is no information, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have given a leading question.

SHRI M. M. JACOB: There is nothing pending in the Home Ministry to my knowledge, Sir.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the passport is becoming a problem for most of the citizens of the country. I would like to know if it is the right of the citizen to get a passport as and when he wants and if so, how much time does it take? Is there any time limit within which the officer concerned is obliged to issue the passport? (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is about fake passport. You are talking about genuine passport. If you are suggesting that we abolish passport, then there is no question of genuine or fake passport. That is a different story. Then you have to direct the question to the Ministry concerned. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: I am talking about this because you do not get a passport. That is why the question of fake passport arises. Therefore, if you permit him, Sir, he will reply. If you do not permit, all right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is no question of my not wanting. This question is about fake passport. The question of issuing of passports quickly is a different question and that does not come within the purview of the Home Ministry. That is why I stopped you.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Give me one second, please.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The supplementary should be within the purview of the main question and whether the passports are issued quickly or not is a different question.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: It is question of passport, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The supplementary has to be within the purview of the question.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: All right. I abide by your decision.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can put a separate question.

श्री हरबन्ध सिंह हंसपाल : इसको अगर ऐसे कह लें कि क्या मंत्री महोदय पता लगायेंगे कि फेक पासपोर्ट के लिए रक्रेट क्यों चलते हैं ? इसके लिए वह क्या प्रबंध करेंगे कि फेक पासपोर्ट इशु न हों ?

SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA: Sir, I would like to ask a question about issuing of passport. It came out in the newspapers that certain foreign Embassies had been given instructions that before they issue Visas to people from Punjab, they should consult the Ministry because it is related to the passport, and this question that people going out from Punjab before they are given Visas, they should consult the Ministry. Some of these Visas had been denied by the Embassies saying that they have been given these instructions. This has come out in the newspapers. It happened to a businessman from Amritsar. Is that a policy or what has come out in the newspapers is incorrect?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Have you issued any such instructions to the Embassy?

SHRI M. M. JACOB: No such instructions have been issued by us.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He says, no.

SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA: This gentleman was told and it has come

out in the newspapers but it has not been denied. That is the point I would like to know.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He categorically said, no such instructions have been issued.

SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA: Then why not deny the newspaper report?

MR. CHAIRMAN: They are denying it.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: They cannot give instructions to the foreign Embassies. Is there a letter just written to the Ministry? (Interruptions). Is there any letter just received by the Ministry? ... (Interruption)...

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: How is it possible? It is on fake passport they are talking...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Sivaji ... (Interruptions)...

महाजन साहब, जरा बैठिए । आप तो पुराने आदमी हैं ।

SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA: Sir, I will give them a specific instance...

श्री लक्ष्मणपति : जनरल साहब, आप भी बैठिए । कुछ तो डिस्टिप्लिन होता है आप तो जनरल हैं । ... (व्यवधान)

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: While applying for a passport it is to be certified by an official of the rank of Deputy Secretary. Are there any instances in the knowledge of the Government where the authorities have certified untruths and half-truths while certifying the passport applications?

SHRI M. M. JACOB: Sir, the question is not clear.

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: While applying for a passport it is warranted that it is to be certified...

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Sir, he should ask the External Affairs Minister, not the Home Minister. ... (Interruptions)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is of fake passports.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Sir, you don't allow such questions....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nobody applies for a fake passport. (Interruptions)...

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: While applying for a passport it is to be certified by an official not below the rank of District Magistrate. Are there any instances in the knowledge of the Government....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Sivaji, the question is restricted to fake passports.

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Sir, it is in regard to only fake passports.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you get a recommendation from your District Magistrate for a fake passport?

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Are there any instances in the Ministry of Home Affairs in regard to these certificates for fake passports?

SHRI M. M. JACOB: It is not in my knowledge. Sir, fake passports are not issued by the Ministry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He wants you to find out from the State Government or the District authorities as to who recommends for fake passports.

SHRI M. M. JACOB: We have written to the Andhra Pradesh Government for furnishing information about fake passports.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now let us proceed from fake passports to Question No. 44.

Decentralisation of DTC Routes

*44. MAULANA OBAIDULLAH KHAN AZMI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that most of the short distance routes of D.T.C. are uneconomical;