

MATTERS RAISED WITH PERMISSION

Alleged Interference in the Central Information Commission's Functioning

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT (West Bengal): Sir, through you, I wish to draw the attention of the House to, what I consider, an unwarranted interference in the functioning of the Central Information Commission, set up under the Right to Information Act. Now, we have seen very many examples as to how the Government and vested interests in the bureaucracy have tried to dilute the Act. But the latest instance comes in a circular sent by the DoPT to the Central Information Commission, actually directing them as to how they should conduct the functioning of the Commission, which is a clear violation of Section 12(4) of the Act. Sir, as you know, every statutory commission must have the right to decide the way it is going to function. At present, the Information Commission, because of the huge workload it has, sets up independent commissions under various Commissioners to look at the various cases. At present, Sir, according to my information, the Commission has dealt with approximately 40,000 cases and appeals and complaints till June. Now, the Central Government, through the DoPT, has told the Commission that for every single case, major or minor, required or not required, the full bench has to sit. Is this at all practical, Sir? How can a full bench of the Commission with eight Commissioners sit for every single case that comes before the Commission? Clearly, this is something that would sabotage the entire functioning of the Commission and would make a mockery of the rights of every citizen to get the information he or she requires under the Act within a time limit. And this is what the Commission has strongly objected to. Since there may be some ambiguity because of this wrong interpretation of the Central Government, Karnataka has already amended the rules of their Act. So, if the Government feels that there is any ambiguity at all, then it is necessary as demanded by the Commission to have an additional promulgation of a certain set of rules which will make it very clear. In any case, Sir, I appeal to the Government not to sabotage the functioning of the Information Commission, to allow them to function according to their own methods and procedures and not to impose any authority by the Government which will destroy the autonomous functioning of the Commission. Therefore, that circular must be withdrawn at the earliest.

SHRI D. RAJA (Tamil Nadu); Sir, I associate myself with the statement made by the hon. Member.

SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, I associate myself with the statement made by the hon. Member.

SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN (Kerala): Sir, I associate myself with the statement made by the hon. Member.

Lathi-charge on Lawyers in Uttar Pradesh

श्री नन्द किशोर यादव (उत्तर प्रदेश) : धन्यवाद, उपसभापति महोदय। मैं आपके माध्यम से केन्द्र सरकार और इस सदन का ध्यान उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार के तानाशाही रवैये और उत्तर प्रदेश पुलिस की निरंकुशता की तरफ दिलाना चाहता हूँ।