

mentioned System is 79,559. This does not include 24,682 employees of the Education Department of the MCD, which is not covered under the System.

(d) and (e) The gap between the information furnished by the Drawing and Disbursing Officers and Heads of Departments and the number of employees enrolled under the Biometric attendance system is 22,853. However, the actual number of non-existent employees, if any, and action in this regard against the delinquent officials depends upon the outcome of the detailed enquiry, initiated by the MCD in the matter.

Child labour in bidi industry

†*383. SHRI PRABHAT JHA:
SHRI KAPTAN SINGH SOLANKI:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware that the childhood of millions of children engaged in bidi industry in the country is in danger;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken so far by Government to protect the children engaged in the bidi industry of the country?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE): (a) and (b) As per the Census 2001, the number of children working in Pan, bidi and cigarettes industry was 2,52,574 in the country.

(c) The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 prohibits employment of children below the age of 14 years in bidi making and Tobacco processes. Government is implementing the National Child Labour Scheme for the rehabilitated children withdrawn from work where they are provided with bridging education, vocational training, nutrition, stipend, health care facilities etc.

Assent to Anti-Goonda Bill, 2009

*384. SHRI P. KANNAN: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether his Ministry has received the Anti-Goonda Bill, 2009 from a State for further necessary action by the Government of India;
- (b) if yes, the date of receipt of the Bill and the action taken thereon; and
- (c) the present status of the Bill and by when the assent of the President is likely to be obtained?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) to (c) The Government of Karnataka have forwarded the Karnataka Prevention of Dangerous Activities of Bootleggers, Drug-Offenders, Gamblers, Goondas, Immoral Traffic Offenders and Slum-Grabbers (Amendment) Bill, 2009, which was received on

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

07.10.2009 for consideration and assent of the President of India. The Government of Puducherry have sent the Puducherry Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Bill, 2008, which was received in the Ministry on 06.11.2009. Both these Bills have currently been referred to the concerned Ministries for their comments. Final comments from all the Ministries have not been received so far. We would expect the comments from the various Ministries to be furnished within 60 days. It is not possible to prescribe any time limit by which the assent of the President would be obtained.

Trade deficit

†*385. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the trade deficit has increased as compared to the last fiscal year;
- (b) if so, the details of import-export value, year-wise, during the last three years;
- (c) the reasons for increase in trade deficit during the said period; and
- (d) the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) India's merchandise export and import figures for the period 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09 and for the period April to October 2009-10 in US Dollar terms, are given in the Statement-I (See below).

(c) Increase in trade deficit during 2007-08 and 2008-09 was predominantly accounted for by higher imports of petroleum crude/products, fertilizers, and raw material and machinery/equipment required for Indian industry. On the export front, India's merchandise exports declined since October 2008, which can be attributed significantly to shrinkage of demand in developed countries due to global economic slowdown, and the reduced international prices of commodities. The trade deficit during April to October, 2009-10 has reduced in comparison to the same period last year, mainly on account of reduced prices of crude petroleum etc. leading to reduced import bill and the progressive reduction in the decline in export growth.

(d) To arrest the decline in exports, and to extend support for growth in exports, various measures have been taken by the Government and RBI in the last 3 years in the form of stimulus packages and in the Budget, 2009-10, particularly for exporting sectors, as given in Statement-II (See below). Additional measures had been announced in the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP), 2009-14 released on 27.08.09. FTP, 2009-14 has been laid in Parliament.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.