

(e) what action has so far been taken against the antiques thieves?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI NIHAR RANJAN LASKAR) :

(a) to (e) The Central Bureau of Investigation busted an international gang of antique thieves and smugglers operating in India, neighbouring countries and the United States in the recent past. The following three persons were arrested in this connection:—

(1) Shri Harish Chander Ghildiyal,
r/o E. 151, Greater Kailash Part-I,
New Delhi.

(2) Shri Pritam Chand,
Proprietor of Fabulous Arts,
22, Lok Nayak Bhawan,
Khan Market,
New Delhi.

(3) Shri R. Venkatesh,
r/o II, F. 67, Lajpat Nagar,
New Delhi.

In all 57 objects were seized from the residential premises of Shri Pritam Chand at C-44, Pampash Enclave, New Delhi, and from his shop premises at 22, Lok Nayak Bhawan, New Delhi. Out of the aforesaid 57 objects, 48 objects have been declared as antiquities by the Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi. The approximate value of the Seized objects as assessed by the Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi is more than Rs. two lakhs in India. There is a proposal to bring back to India the antique object of Sun God (Surya) smuggled out of India by the said accused persons and seized by the U.S. Customs. The Central Bureau of Investigation have registered a case F.I.R. No. R.C.I/83-CIU(A), New Delhi.

French Pensioners Residing in Pondicherry

1113. SHRI V. P. M. SAMY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total number of French Pensioners residing in the Union Territory of Pondicherry as on 31st March, 1983 and what is the total amount of pension disbursed to them for a quarter; and

(b) what is the total amount of foreign exchange obtained every year through the French Council?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH): (a) and (b) The requisite information is still awaited from the U.T. Administration. It will be laid on the Table of the House on receipt from the U.T. Administration.

Wanton Deforestation in Dehradun

1114. SHRI MAQSOOD ALI KHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made any survey as to damage done to the environment by unwarranted deforestation on the Mussorie Hills in Dehradun;

(b) what is the total wealth of forests lost to the country by cutting of the trees; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to stop this mischief further?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINH): (a) and (b) Damage to the environment in Mussoorie Hills is caused mainly by limestone quarrying operations covering a total area of 1.043 ha. Out of which 803.6 ha. is forest area. No estimate of the trees lost is readily available with the concerned Ministry.

(c) Following steps are being taken to check environmental degradation due to mining operations:—

(i) non-renewal and, if necessary, pre-mature termination of mining leases in critical areas; and

(ii) urgent implementation of a project for rehabilitation of Mussoorie Hills which has been declared as environmentally fragile area.