

Intimidation of and threat to newspaper correspondents by anti-social elements

625. SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI:

SHRI SADASHIV BAGAITKAR:

SHRI GANAPAT HIRALAL BHAGAT:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that the newspaper correspondents in the States of Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra are threatened by anti-social elements as well as pressurised by Government representatives not to expose the weakness of Government; and

(b) whether the Central Government propose to issue directions to State Governments on broad policy formulations to protect the freedom of the Press?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) Some incidents of violence against newspaper correspondents/journalists have come to the notice of the Government. The concerned State Governments have, however, taken necessary legal action in the matter. It is not correct to generalise such incidents as a regular phenomenon. It is also not correct to say that the State Governments have been pressurising the newspaper correspondents.

(b) No, Sir, Government's commitment to the freedom of the press is well-known and has been reiterated time and again.

Pending cases in Allahabad High Court

626. SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have agreed to the establishment of a Bench of the Allahabad High Court in Western Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, when it is likely to be established and where;

(c) what is the number of cases pending in the Allahabad High Court as on 31st March, 1981;

(d) what is the number of cases out of (c) above, which pertain to Western Uttar Pradesh and would be dealt with by the proposed Bench;

(e) what are the names of other High Courts which also face similar demand for establishment of Benches in their jurisdiction; and

(f) what are the parameters for the establishment of such Benches taken into consideration by Government?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI SHIV SHANKAR): (a) and (b) The State Government have made recommendation to the Government of India that legislation be undertaken to establish a Bench for the western districts of Uttar Pradesh comprised in the Commissioner's Divisions of Garhwal, Meerut, Agra, Moradabad, Bareilly and Kumaon. They have left the decision about the seat of the proposed Bench to the Government of India. They have further requested the Government of India to look into the matter from all aspects and taken necessary action. The Government of India have decided to set up a three-member Commission to consider all aspects arising out of the demand for constitution