

Rs. 20,000 (of the value of Rs. 10,000 each) issued in the name of Bharat Sadhu Samaj. However, the matter is under investigation of the Central Bureau of Investigation.

Control of news media by big business houses

1085. SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI:
SHRIMATI LEELA DAMODARA MENON:
SHRIMATI USHI KHAN:
SHRI GURUDEV GUPTA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the reports appearing in a section of the Press to the effect that big business houses and some foreign agencies are controlling the news media by investing huge funds in the national dailies published from Delhi, Bombay and Madras; and

(b) whether it has recently come to Government's knowledge that the Associated General and Goenka Groups have received huge funds from anonymous sources; if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ZULFIQUARULLAH): (a) and (b) The requisite information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Excise duty remission granted to the Indian Tobacco Company and the Ahmedabad Advance Mills

1086. SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI:
SHRIMATI USHI KHAN:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Tobacco Company and the

Ahmedabad Advance Mills were granted special favour by Government on the 19th March, 1978 by quashing the demand notices issued by the Central Excise and Customs Department;

(b) if so, what is the quantum of concessions obtained by these two firms along with the other firms between the 1st March, 1977 and March 1978; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to stop such drain on public funds?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATISH AGARWAL): (a) On a representation received in the Department of Revenue from the Indian Leaf Tobacco Development Company against a demand for customs duty issued by the Madras Custom House, an *ad hoc* exemption order was issued on 19th March, 1977, after obtaining the orders of the then Minister for Revenue and Banking. A representation received from M/s Ahmedabad Advance Mills Bombay, against a demand for customs duty issued by the Bombay Custom House was also examined and the orders of the then Minister for Revenue and Banking were taken for the issue of an *ad hoc* order granting exemption from the duty demanded by the Bombay Custom House. This exemption order was also issued on the 19th March, 1977.

(b) As regards the quantum of the concessions, the duty demanded by the Madras Custom House from the Indian Leaf Tobacco Development Company was Rs. 90.77 lacs. However, the Government, at that time, took the view that, on the basis of the use to which the goods were put, the correct customs duty equal to central excise duty leviable thereon, should have been Rs. 11.40 lacs and not Rs. 90.77 lacs as demanded by the Custom House Madras.

In the case of M/s Ahmedabad Advance Mills, the duty demand was for a total amount of Rs. 144 lacs. The duty demands for Rs. 90.77 lacs against the Indian Leaf Tobacco Development Company and for Rs. 144 lacs against M/s Ahmedabad Advance Mills, were withdrawn by the Custom Houses.

The question also seeks information about the "other firms". As no names of the "other firms" have been given, it is presumed that the information required is in respect of the concessions given in cases of the type mentioned in part (a) above—that is to say, where *ad hoc* exemptions were given after the demands had been raised for customs duty short levied. The case of another firm M/s Maddi Venkatratnam and Company Private Limited fell in this category, wherein the Madras Custom House had raised a duty demand for a total sum of Rs. 13 lacs. The *ad hoc* order was issued in this case on the 29th June, 1977, exempting a part of the consignment which, after reimportation, had been exported out of India, from the whole of the duty leviable thereon and exempting the remaining part, which had been destroyed as unfit for human consumption, from the customs duty in excess of Rs. 5/- per kg. In this case, however, the demand has not so far been withdrawn.

(c) The matter concerning the scope of Section 25(2) of the Customs Act, 1962, is under examination.

Abolition of 'P' Form requirement

1087. SHRI SHIVA CHANDRA JHA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have recently abolished the 'P' Form requirement for those going abroad and have made further liberalisation in the passport rules; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI H. M. PATEL): (a) Yes Sir. Government have recently decided to abolish the 'P' form requirement for those going abroad. However, no further liberalisation, as a result of the abolition of 'P' form, has been made in the passport rules.

(b) The Reserve Bank of India will shortly issue instructions to airlines/shipping companies and travel agents for booking of passages, indicating the procedure to be followed after the abolition of the 'P' form.

1974 की रेल हड़ताल के दौरान महालेखा-
कार कार्यालय, शिमला के कर्मचारियों
को सेवा से हटाया जाना

1088. श्री सुन्दर सिंह भंडारी :
क्या वित्त मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे
कि :

(क) क्या सरकार को जानकारी है कि 1974 में रेलवे कर्मचारियों द्वारा की गयी हड़ताल के समर्थन में हड़ताल में भाग लेने के आरोप पर महालेखाकार कार्यालय, शिमला के 10 कर्मचारियों को सेवा से निकाल दिया गया था ;

(ख) क्या यह सच है कि हड़ताल में भाग लेने वाले रेल कर्मचारियों को पुनः सेवा में ले लिया गया है परन्तु महालेखाकार कार्यालय, शिमला के उक्त कर्मचारियों को अभी भी सेवा में नहीं लिया गया है ; और

(ग) क्या यह भी सच है कि हिमाचल प्रदेश उच्च न्यायालय ने नवम्बर, 1974 में ही इन कर्मचारियों को बहाल करने के आदेश जारी कर दिये थे ?