

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (DR. JITENDRA SINGH): (a) and (b) The information is not centrally maintained.

(c) As far as the Central Information Commission is concerned, the pendency of appeals/complaints as on 31st October, 2014 is 33898.

(d) The Central Information Commission has been granted autonomy in recruitment of staff. Recruitment Rules (RRs) have been notified for all the 14 categories of posts in the Central Information Commission. The Commission is in the process of making appointment to the various posts.

In addition to the above, Government has appointed five more Information Commissioners in the Central Information Commission w.e.f. 22nd November, 2013.

The Government has also taken several steps like issue of guidelines for the Central Public Information Officers and First Appellate Authorities enabling them to supply information/dispose of first appeal effectively resulting in less number of appeals to the Commission.

#### **Establishment of Jan Lokpal**

552. SHRI A.U. SINGH DEO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- (a) the current status of the establishment of the Jan Lokpal;
- (b) the steps being taken by Government for appointment of the Lokpal, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government has fixed any time-line in this regard, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the current status of the amendments to be carried out in the Search Committee/ Panel Rules, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (DR. JITENDRA SINGH): (a) to (d) The Central Government, in exercise of powers conferred by sub-section (1) read with clause (b) of sub-section (2) of section 59 of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013, notified the Search Committee (Constitution, Terms and Conditions of appointment of members and the manner of selection of Panel of Names for appointment of Chairperson and Members of Lokpal) Rules, 2014 on 17th January, 2014. A writ petition has been filed by Common

Cause, a Registered Society, before the Supreme Court wherein, *inter alia*, challenge has been made to the validity of the Search Committee Rules. During the course of hearing of the case by the Supreme Court on 5th May, 2014, the Court was informed that the Government will re-examine the issue and make formal amendments in the Rules and only thereafter proceed further in the matter. Accordingly, Government examined the matter and necessary amendments in the Search Committee Rules have since been notified in the official Gazette on 27th August, 2014.

A number of writ petitions have also been filed in various High Courts, challenging, *inter alia*, certain provisions of the Act and the Search Committee Rules. Government has filed applications before the Supreme Court for transfer of these writ petitions to the Supreme Court so as to get authoritative pronouncement on all these issues, so that the institution of Lokpal can be made functional at the earliest.

Under the circumstances, no specific time-line has been fixed for making appointments in the Lokpal.

#### **On-line access to RTI replies**

553. SHRIMATI WANSUK SYIEM: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether all replies given under the RTI by ministries would be available for access to all, on-line, very soon; and

(b) whether this proposed step would not only improve transparency but also reduce workload of Government officials and eliminate possibilities of repeated RTI queries on the same issue, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (DR. JITENDRA SINGH): (a) A facility to upload the reply of RTI applications and first appeals on the respective website of the Ministry/ Department has been started from 31st October, 2014. All the Ministries/Departments of Government, of India have been requested to upload the reply to RTI application and first appeal on their respective websites, except the replies relating to the personal information of an individual, if they do not serve any public interest.

(b) This step would not only promote transparency but is also likely to reduce workload of public authorities, as there would be no need for citizens for repeated RTI queries on the same issues.

#### **Widening the definition of “sexual harassment”**

554. SHRI MAJEED MEMON: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has announced amending rules to widen ambit of the