

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

definition of “sexual harassment” and “work place” to make working conditions even more conducive for women; and

(b) whether new rules could bring in more clarity on various offense punishable under the law, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (DR. JITENDRA SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. The Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964 have been amended on 19.11.2014 to widen the definition of sexual harassment and workplace.

(b) As per the new definition contained in the Explanation (1)(a) under Rule 3C of the Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964, “sexual harassment” includes any one or more of the following acts or behaviour (whether directly or by implication) namely:

- (i) physical contact and advances; or
- (ii) a demand or request for sexual favours; or
- (iii) making sexually coloured remarks; or
- (iv) showing pornography; or
- (v) any other unwelcome physical, verbal, non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature.

The following circumstances, among other circumstances, if it occurs or is present in relation to or connected with any act or behaviour of sexual harassment may amount to sexual harassment:

- (i) implied or explicit promise of preferential treatment in employment; or
- (ii) implied or explicit threat of detrimental treatment in employment; or
- (iii) implied or explicit threat about her present or future employment status; or
- (iv) interference with her work or creating an intimidating or offensive or hostile work environment for her; or
- (v) humiliating treatment likely to affect her health or safety.

Further, as per Explanation (1)(c) under Rule 3C of the Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964, “Workplace” includes,-

- (i) any department, organisation, undertaking, establishment, enterprise, institution, office, branch or unit which is established, owned, controlled or wholly or substantially financed by funds provided directly or indirectly by the Central Government;
- (ii) hospitals or nursing homes;

- (iii) any sports institute, stadium, sports complex or competition or games venue, whether residential or not used for training, sports or other activities relating thereto;
- (iv) any place visited by the employee arising out of or during the course of employment including transportation provided by the employer for undertaking such journey;
- (v) a dwelling place or a house.

Tapping of expertise of retired Government officials

555. SHRI SALIM ANSARI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is considering a proposal to tap expertise of huge pool of retired Government officials in order to contribute to the country's growth story, if so, the details of the proposal; and
- (b) whether any "concept paper" has been prepared for giving pre-retirement counseling to Government officials and if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (DR. JITENDRA SINGH): (a) and (b) Department of Pensions and Pensioners' Welfare has launched an initiative on pilot basis for 2000 pensioners to prepare the individual for life after retirement and to channelize energy, experience and skill of retired and retiring Government personnel into meaningful voluntary work.

Under this initiative, one of the components is to conduct pre-retirement counseling workshop to help the retiring Central Government civil employees to transit smoothly into post retirement phase.

Declaration of assets and liabilities by Government officials

556. SHRI SALIM ANSARI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- (a) whether all Government officials have been asked to declare information on assets and liabilities of self, spouses and dependent children by 31st December, 2014;
- (b) whether officers of public sector undertakings and Banks are also required to furnish the requisite information to their respective departments; and
- (c) if so, the complete details of information required to be furnished by Government employees under the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Acts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (DR. JITENDRA SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. Section 44