

the Railway Protection Force (RPF), are supplementing efforts of States to ensure security of passengers and passenger area. In addition, concerned District Police is responsible for security of tracks, bridges, tunnels and law and order issues.

In view of multiplicity of law enforcement agencies, overlapping of role and responsibilities of these agencies, problem of inter-State coordination, duplicity of manpower and resources, there is some time confusion among travelling passengers with regard to registration of First Information Report (FIR) etc.

RPF has been entrusted with the responsibility of protection and security of passengers and passenger area, with the amendments in the RPF Act and the Railways Act in the year 2003, without commensurate legal powers, which is proving a major hindrance in controlling crime against passengers. RPF needs legal powers to deal with passengers related offences to strengthen security of passengers and passenger area over Indian Railways.

A proposal for amendment in the RPF Act, 1957, to empower RPF to deal with passenger related offences in the passenger area, has been moved by the Ministry of Railways with the concurrence of Ministries of Law and Justice and Home Affairs. As advised by the Cabinet Secretariat, comments of States have been solicited on the above proposal. Comments have so far been received from 25 States. 17 States/Union Territories (UT) have opposed the move to amend the RPF Act, 07 States/UT have given their consent, 01 UT has not offered any comment and reply is awaited from 06 States. However, Ministry of Home Affairs has recently conveyed their opposition to the proposed amendments in the RPF Act. Matter is being further considered in the Ministry of Railways.

Protecting identity of Bhagalpur as 'Silk City'

†*222. SHRIMATI KAHKASHAN PERWEEN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Bhagalpur is known as 'Silk City' but it is losing its said identity; and

(b) if so, the steps being taken by Government to protect its identity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) and (b) Bhagalpur in Bihar is known for production of sarees, silk fabrics and furnishing materials made out of tasar silk for the domestic and export markets. However, this hand woven clothes industry has been facing several constraints. With a view to overcome the existing constraints and promote the industry, setting up of the Mega Handloom Cluster for Bhagalpur was announced at a total cost

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

of ₹1715.15 lakh having Government of India share of ₹ 1621.71 lakh in 2014-15. Action has been initiated for implementation of the project in consultation with the State Government by the Office of Development Commissioner (Handloom) and Detailed Project Report (DPR) has been prepared by the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Patna campus.

Further, the Government through Central Silk Board (CSB) in consultation with the State Governments has been taking up the following activities for promotion of tasar Sericulture:-

- (i) Tasar host plant in tasar growing States;
- (ii) Production and supply of tasar silkworm seed; and
- (iii) Promotion of tasar reeling.

Besides, the Government has been taking up the following steps for promotion of Handloom sector:-

- (i) Development of block level clusters with setting up of Common Facility Centres (CFCs), Skill upgradation programmes, services of a professional designer and a diploma holder, supply of raw material through National Handloom Development Corporation (NHDC);
- (ii) Branding and marketing of high value quality products through 'India Handloom' Brand; and
- (iii) Linking handlooms with fashion and tourism. National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) campuses are mobilized for supporting promotion of handloom.

Backlog vacancies of SC and ST category

*223. SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of backlog vacancies belonging to SC and ST category in Group A and B posts, as on 31st March, 2015; and

(b) the number of backlog vacancies filled up during April, 2014 to March, 2015 in Group A, B, C and D posts?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SURESH PRABHU): (a) There is no backlog vacancies of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in Group 'A' services