

The remaining obsolete Acts identified for repeal, including 45 Acts and 11 Ordinances of pre-independence/colonial era have been circulated among all the Ministries/ Departments in the Government of India for their comments for repeal.

(c) No, Sir. Repeal of obsolete laws requires consultations and concurrence of the concerned Ministries/Departments.

Checking use of money and muscle power in elections

1859. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to designate malpractices, such as, bribing voters and paid political news, as specific crimes, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) the concrete steps taken by Government to check use of money and muscle power during elections?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI P.P. CHAUDHARY): (a) and (b) A proposal for making electoral bribery a cognizable offence under IPC 171B is under the consideration of the Government. The Law Commission in its 255th Report has made several recommendations on electoral reforms which, *inter alia*, include making paid news an electoral offence. The recommendations of the Law Commission are under the consideration of the Government.

The Election Commission has taken various steps to check money power in election, such as appointment of Expenditure Observers, Surveillance Teams to keep vigil over movement of cash, monitoring media advertisements, maintenance of Shadow Observation Register in respect of each contesting candidate, and constitution Video Surveillance Team to oversee major items of expenditure and opening of separate bank accounts by the candidates, etc.

Sittings of Parliament

1860. SHRI RITABRATA BANERJEE: Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether it is a fact that the number of scheduled sittings of Parliament have decreased in the last two years, if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor; and

(b) whether Government proposes to increase the number of sittings?