

Interest amount accruing from MPLADS Funds

DR. JOHN BRITTAS (Kerala): Sir, vide Office Memorandum F.No.1(18)/PFMS/FCD/2021 dated 9.3.2022 issued by Department of Expenditure, the Government revised the procedure for flow of funds under Central Sector Schemes including MPLADS. Para 3(viii) of the said O.M. stipulates that all interest earnings from the funds released for each Central Sector Scheme shall mandatorily be remitted back to the Consolidated Fund of India. Para 3(xi) stipulates that implementing authorities shall immediately return all unspent amounts of the schemes, that is, including interest accrued, lying in their accounts to Central Nodal Agency. However, it has been specified in the extant MPLADS guidelines in unequivocal terms that the interest accrued on the funds released under the MPLAD Scheme to the District Authority is to be used for permissible works recommended by the MP concerned. The interest accrued on the funds released under the Scheme to the implementing agencies shall be calculated while arriving at the savings for each work. As such, MPs have categorically been bestowed with the solemn right to recommend works also for the interest amount accrued for the MPLADS Fund disbursed to them. Otherwise, interest loss will be around Rs.800-1000 crore for five years when all MPs are considered in toto.

Hence, I request the Government to take steps to preserve the said facility by excluding MPLAD Scheme from the ambit of the revised guidelines and continue to permit Members of Parliament to recommend works for the interest amount accrued for MPLADS Funds disbursed to them every year by retaining the procedure in vogue as such.

DR. V. SIVADASAN (Kerala): Sir, I associate myself with the Special Mention made by the hon. Member.

SHRI ABIR RANJAN BISWAS (West Bengal): Sir, I also associate myself with the Special Mention made by the hon. Member.

SHRI BINOY VISWAM (Kerala): Sir, I also associate myself with the Special Mention made by the hon. Member.

SHRI A.A. RAHIM (Kerala): Sir, I also associate myself with the Special Mention made by the hon. Member.

DR. SANTANU SEN (West Bengal): Sir, I also associate myself with the Special Mention made by the hon. Member.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Jayant Chaudhary; not present.

Need for amendments in IT Act, 2000 to deal with criminal activities through social media

SHRI P. WILSON (Tamil Nadu): Sir, it is common feature that criminal elements are using social media to spread fake news and hate campaigns. These social media websites employ algorithms to analyse words, phrases or hashtags to create a list of topics sorted in order of popularity. Their business model thrives on the prospect of an increasing cumulative engagement. However, this facilitates the spread of hate, bigotry and fake news by feeding mob mentality. The situations are worsened by the use of automated bot accounts to influence engagement, target and troll certain persons or communities. Malicious actors influence others to target, defame & malign persons, groups & communities through social media mostly by disseminating fake news and defamatory content. More often than not they target holders of public office & constitutional functionaries including the judiciary. Usage of such bot accounts by disgruntled persons to troll & stifle criticism is an open secret. By the time the affected party moves to court, the damage is already done. Currently, there are no penal provisions to book the offenders after Section 66A of the IT Act which was struck down by the Supreme Court due to its infirmities. It is essential for the Police to have powers enabling them to immediately curtail the dissemination of such posts that defame persons or incite criminal activities, riots or threaten the security of the State. I request the hon. IT Minister to bring necessary amendments with stringent penal provisions in IT Act, 2000 which is the need of the hour.

DR. SANTANU SEN (West Bengal): Sir, I associate myself with the Special Mention made by the hon. Member.

DR. V. SIVADASAN (Kerala): Sir, I also associate myself with the Special Mention made by the hon. Member.

SHRI ABIR RANJAN BISWAS (West Bengal): Sir, I also associate myself with the Special Mention made by the hon. Member.