

Judges in Guwahati High Court

3123. SHRI N. TOMBI SINGH: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to increase the number of judges to meet the requirements of the proposed permanent branches in Imphal, Agartala and other State capitals within the jurisdiction of the Guwahati High Court; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE AND MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND):
(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It has been decided to increase the present sanctioned strength of the Guwahati High Court of 12 Judges to 17 permanent Judges and 2 Additional Judges.

[Translation]

Loss to Bidi Workers Welfare cess due to Evasion of Central Excise duty

3124. SHRI MADAN PANDEY : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the All-India Bidi Workers Association has alleged that evasion of central excise duty leads to loss of Bidi workers' Welfare cess; and

(b) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI A.K. PANJA): (a) and (b). The Government have not received any representation from the All-India Bidi Workers Association alleging that

evasion of Central Excise duty leads to loss of bidi workers welfare cess. A representation from the All-India Bidi Cigar and Tobacco Workers Federation has, however, been forwarded to this Ministry from the Ministry of labour. In the said representation a request has, inter-alia, been made for withdrawal of central excise duty exemption on 20 lakhs unbranded bidis allowed in a financial year alleging that such exemption is being mis-used by unscrupulous bidi manufacturers leading to evasion of both central excise duties as well as bidi welfare cess. The matter has been considered by the Government and because of administrative reasons it has been decided not to withdraw the said exemption as it is availed of mainly by persons in the unorganised/cottage sector.

[English]

Delegation of Magisterial Powers to Railway Officers

3125. SHRI R. M. BHOYE : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some suggestions have been received by Government that Magisterial powers be conferred on nominated railway officers so that they could try such offences as ticket-less travel, trespass, roof-travel and unauthorised entry of persons into ladies' compartments;

(b) the other suggestions received about these matters; and

(c) the reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) and (b). The suggestion to confer magisterial powers on nominated Railway Officers to try some offences has been made in the Report of the