

# RIGHT TO INFORMATION - 2002

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## **Little action taken on Right to Information Act (1)**

NEW DELHI, JAN. 10. While the Delhi Government has lost no opportunity to pat itself on the back for having passed the Right to Information Act, 2001, its departments have lagged behind seriously in implementing it. What is worse a majority of departments have failed to submit the Action Taken Report (ATR) by the December 26 deadline, despite repeated reminders about how "serious" the administration was about sharing information. Interestingly, the Secretary (Administrative Reforms), S.K. Srivastava, was forced to send a letter to the Heads of Departments on January 6 reminding them about the poor implementation of the Right to Information Act and Rules 2001 which made a mockery of the whole exercise. This itself conveys the manner in which the whole Act is being complied with by the HoDs who have failed to take even basic measures of putting up sign boards regarding the rights of the common man to seek information. (Hindu 11.1.02)

## **No move to effect Bill on Right to Information (1)**

New Delhi, January 18: OVER 75 per cent of the Delhi government departments have not undertaken steps to implement the Right to Information Bill, admitted Chief Secretary P S Bhatnagar on Friday. Delhi Transport Corporation, Delhi Vidyut Board and Directorate of Prosecution have already admitted their failure. The Act came into force only four days ago. DTC says it will take a month for starting an information centre at the headquarters. Three months time has been sought to provide information on the web. DVB has cited government policy not to recruit additional personnel as a major hurdle in the implementation of the Act. (Hindustan Times 19.1.02)

## **MCD flayed for denial of right to information (1)**

NEW DELHI, FEB. 24. Following large-scale complaints from people that the Right to Information Act was hardly being implemented by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, the State Chief Minister, Sheila Dikshit, has expressed her strong displeasure with the civic body. In a recent letter to the MCD, Ms. Dikshit — in her capacity as chairperson of the State Council for Right to Information — is understood to have sought an explanation from the civic body. Ms. Dikshit is learnt to have brought to the notice of the MCD the complaints being received by people that even senior officials of the civic body were not aware about the Act, which came into effect on October 2, 2001. The Act empowers residents of the Capital to seek any type of information — except for some — from the civic body after paying a nominal fee and the MCD has to provide it within a month, failing which the officials concerned are liable to be penalised. (Hindu 25.2.02)

3<sup>rd</sup> May

Voters have the right to know candidates, antecedents: SC (1)

NEW DELHI, MAY 2. Upholding the voter's (little man-citizen's) right to know — (within the meaning of freedom of speech and expression under Article 19 (1) (or) of the Constitution) — antecedents, including criminal past of candidate contesting election for membership of Parliament or a State legislature" for survival of democracy, the Supreme Court today directed the Election Commission to obtain information on affidavit from each such candidate on his/her conviction/ acquittal/ discharge of any criminal offence together with details of punishment, if any. The EC is also enjoined to obtain information, whether prior to six months of filing of nomination the candidate is accused in any pending case, of any offence punishable with imprisonment for two years or more, and in which charge is framed or cognisance is taken by the court of law, and if so, the details thereof. (Hindu 3.5.02)

9<sup>th</sup> May

Right to information a tool to curb corruption, says CM (1)

NEW DELHI, May 8. — Notwithstanding the fact that Delhi'ites are not exercising their Right to Information, Delhi government departments have also been found to be unduly lax in providing information. The state council which monitors the operation of the Right, met today and admitted that rules to inspect documents, an inherent feature of the Act-had not been framed so far. The chief minister, Mrs Sheili Dikshit, who chaired the first meeting convened seven months after it was constituted said the Delhi Right to Information Act 2001 was an important Act which the Delhites could employ to fight corruption. (Statesman 9.5.02)

31st May

Right to information: NGOs to play pro-active role (1)

May 30. — The administrative machinery is apathetic to providing information and DelW'ites do not seem keen to exercise their right to information, which is a weapon against corruption and administrative inefficiency. Is there a way out? The voluntary agencies should believe in action and not words as they how the key in propagating use of this right, officials say. Though at the -first state council meeting on the Right to Information held recently had inane suggestions like the already overburdened school-children to : spread awareness of this. right,...the experience of one of the few NGOs .which tested its . use in government departments, Pariyartan, provides an insight into popularising the use of this right. The going was not easy. About 50 residents of east Delhi and some members of the voluntary agency protested, going on a sit-in outside the MCD some months ago. Even though the right was implemented by the Delhi government in October 2001, the MCD had no competent authority.— an official whom people can approach ' with application's seeking information. (Statesman 31.5.02)

12th Dec.

Govt. to strengthen Right to Information (1)

NEW DELHI, DEC. 11. The Delhi Chief Minister, Sheila Dikshit, today indicated that her Government was actively considering certain progressive amendments to the Right to Information Act in order to make it much accessible, stronger and effective. The proposal for drastically lowering the fee charged for seeking information is also under the consideration of the Government, she added. Delivering the valedictory address at the two-day conference on Right to Information and Administrative Reforms, the Chief Minister said she would also be deputing a team of officials and some NGOs to visit Karnataka to get a first hand account about the Right to Information Act formulated there which is said to be very sound piece of document. (Hindu 12.12.02)

17th Dec.

Parliament okays Information Bill (1)

New Delhi, December 16: PARLIAMENT ON Monday gave its approval to the historic Freedom of Information Bill, 2002, giving citizens statutory right of access to official information. The Bill, passed by the Lok Sabha on December 3, received the Rajya Sabha's approval on Monday Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pension, Vasundhara Raje, replying to the debate said that openness is fundamental to a modern state. She said of the nearly 200 countries in the world, only 20, including India, have enacted such a provision. Though the Bill barred cases to be taken to the High Court and even the Consumer Court as they already had a large pendency of cases, it allows for writ petition in high courts and the Supreme Court, she said. (Hindustan Times 17.12.02)