

Right to Information Act Enforced in Sikkim

GANGTOK, Oct. 25. - The Right to Information bill, unanimously passed in the monsoon session of both Houses of the Parliament, has received the assent of the President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam. The bill becoming an Act has been already implemented in Sikkim from October 12 and all the government departments will also have designated officers to provide any information sought by anyone of the public. Ascertaining this fact, Mr TN Kazi, joint secretary of State Department of Personnel Affairs, informed that the Right to Information Act, 2005 is fully implemented in the entire State of Sikkim and Public Information Officers (PIOs) have been appointed in all the departments of the State. Recently, the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP), Sikkim State unit had alleged that the Act has not been fully implemented in Sikkim. When asked about such allegation, Mr Kazi said; "The Right to Information Act is implemented by the Central Government and it is automatically implemented in Sikkim and in this regard we have already appointed State Public Information Officers." A State Information Commission with judicial power will be set up in near future which will also include a sitting MLA of the opposition party as a representative in the commission, he informed. With the Act implemented in the State anyone can obtain information from various government departments through PIOs by applying with a simple letter seeking the desired information. However queries regarding matters of national security will be not be entertained. The PIOs have to give the desired information within a month. This is necessary because, according to the Right to Information Act now in force, denial of information will be an offence, that would attract penal action, he said.

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