

submitting its affidavit. So, as the matter is *sub judice*, I am not in a position...(Interruptions)...

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: No, no. (Interruptions)...

SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA: No, it is not *sub judice*. (Interruptions)...

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: No, Sir. (Interruptions)...

SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA: No, he cannot say that it is *sub judice*. (Interruptions)...

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: No, Sir. It is atrocious, Sir. (Interruptions)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. (Interruptions)... Please sit down. (Interruptions)...

CAPT. SATISH SHARMA: Sir, I am going to give the list to the House. (Interruptions)... I will give the list to the House, Sir. (Interruptions)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is willing to give the list to the House. (Interruptions)...

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: When will he give the list to the House? (Interruptions)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is willing to give the list to the House. (Interruptions)... Now please sit down. Let us go to the other business. (Interruptions)... Please. Short Notice Question No. 1, Shri Kishore Chandra Deo. (Interruptions)... Please, no. (Interruptions)... No more questions. Please sit down.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTIONS

Use of Reserved Forests Area for mining of Gems and Stones in Andhra Pradesh

1. SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he is aware of the use of reserved forests area for the mining of

gems and precious stones in Visakhapatnam Distt. of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the action taken by the Central Government to prevent use of forests area for non-forests purposes; and

(c) if not, what action the Central Government propose to take in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Yes, Sir. It is reported by the State Government of Andhra Pradesh that unauthorised extraction of coloured stones was attempted by villagers in Sankaram Reserve Forests in Kinchalli beat in Chodavaram Range Visakhapatnam District on 21.1.95. The forest staff took immediate steps to stop the illegal extraction. Fourteen cases were registered by the Forest Department and two cases were registered by the Police.

(b) The State Govt. has been requested to ensure that no violation of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 takes place during investigation and prospecting of minerals in forest areas. The Chief Conservator of Forests (Central), Southern Region, Ministry of Environment & Forests has been dispatched for on the spot assessment.

(c) Does not arise.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: Mr. Chairman, Sir, his imperial majesty, the Chairman of the National Front, has been abetting in and has been a party to, the illegal mining of gems from the reserved forest areas. As far back as 25th January certain arrests were made by the Forest Department. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether these people, who were arrested on charges of illegal mining, have been released or not. And, if so, on what grounds have they been released? My information is that subsequently the State Government and the Chief Minister with their machinery started conducting these

illegal operations. Those who were arrested some months ago have been released. The second part is that the Forest Conservation Act of 1980 clearly states that the land reserved for forests cannot be used for non-forest purposes. It also clearly specifies that certain action could be taken under section 3(b) of the Forest Conservation Act of 1980. Mr. Chairman, I have got with me a copy of a letter written by the Chief Conservator of Forests quoting the minutes of the meeting which he had with the Chief Minister and other officials of the State Government, wherein he had requested the Forest Officers of the district to give full co-operation to the Chief Whip of the party, a party MLA, and other State Government agencies and authorities, who are going to mine in these forest areas without the permission of the Central Government.

I would like the hon. Minister to first clarify these questions which I have put.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, 14 cases were booked by the Forest Department and 2 cases were booked by the Police Department, as I stated. Subsequently, the State Government decided to compound the cases booked by the Forest Department.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: Why?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: The reasons are not very clear as to why the State Government chose first to register these cases. There are certain allegations which have been made. In fact, there was an article in a newspaper which drew the attention of the various forest officials and this matter was brought to my notice by some hon. MPs. Now, it is not clear why these 14 cases which related to illegal mining, which related to violation of the Forest (Conservation) Act have been withdrawn. I shall take it up with the State Government and get the information about the circumstances under which the cases for violation of

Forest (Conservation) Act and the cases for illegal mining are withdrawn.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Was NTR responsible for compounding these cases? (*Interruptions*).

SHRIMATI MIRA DAS: Sir,...

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, the Chief Minister is the Chief Minister. I cannot say whether it was...

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA:*

SHRIMATI MIRA DAS: What is he saying? (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Mehta, I have not called you. (*Interruptions*). I have not called you to speak. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA:*

MR. CHAIRMAN: This will not be recorded. (*Interruptions*). This will not be recorded. Mr. Minister, please answer. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: *

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Mehta, ...(*Interruptions*).

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: *

SHRI MOHAMMED AFZAL *alias* MEEM AFZAL:*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Afzal, please sit down. (*Interruptions*). Mr. Mehta, please sit down. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA:*

SHRI MHAMMED AFZAL *alias* MEEM AFZAL: *

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is this going on? (*Interruptions*). Mr. Mehta, will you sit down? (*Interruptions*). Please sit down. (*Interruptions*). Please sit down.

SHRI MOHAMMED AFZAL *alias* MEEM AFZAL: He has to apologise. (*Interruptions*). He is saying that...

MR. CHAIRMAN: I said that it is off the record. This is not for the record. (*Interruptions*). This is not for the record.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, I am on a point of order. (*Interruptions*). I am on a point of order. (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. *(Interruptions)*. Let me hear one of you. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: He has to apologise. *(Interruptions)*. He has to apologise. *(Interruptions)*.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. *(Interruptions)*. Will you sit down? *(Interruptions)*. will you sit down? I will say something. *(Interruptions)*. I will say something.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: *

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Mehta, you have to withdraw your statement. You have to withdraw the allegation. *(Interruptions)*.

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): Sir, he has to be admonished. Sir, these remarks should be expunged.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Allow him to say something. *(Interruptions)*. Please keep quiet. Yes, Mr. Mehta.

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: He has to be admonished. *(Interruptions)*. He has to be admonished, Sir. Nobody can pass such remarks. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Sir, I want to make it clear that whenever the issue of corruption comes up... *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is not that. You have accused him. *(Interruptions)*. You will have to apologise. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Sir, he must apologise. *(Interruptions)*. He must apologise. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Sir, I am prepared to act according to the wish... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: No wish. It should be an unconditional apology. *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Chimanbhai Mehta, you have no option but to

apologise. You apologise, otherwise I will have to take action. Will you apologise?

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Unreservedly, I say that my intention of telling him something was not... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: No. No. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: What no? I regret... *(Interruptions)*. Sir, I regret but I want to say that... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: No, no.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Why 'no'?* *(Interruptions)**

Now, Sir, in my life everything is open. You can come to my house and... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, I want to bring a motion before the House to expel him from the House for the remaining term. *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Chimanbhai Mehta, please... *(Interruptions)*. Mr. Chimanbhai Mehta, you please talk to the Chair. The matter is between you and me. You talk to the Chair and let others sit down. You will have to apologise. On this, there is no option. Otherwise, I will take disciplinary action. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Sir, *

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: *

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: *

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: *

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Mehta, will you sit down for the time being? Either you behave properly or... *(Interruptions)* What do you think? Is this a market place? Behave with some dignity as a Member of Parliament. You said something wrong. You will have to apologise.

Will you apologise?

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Yes. I regret, Sir. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: You apologise.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: All right. I apologise, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Please sit down.

Let us go to the Question now. Second supplementary, please.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: Sir, the hon. Minister has only confirmed my apprehension that those who were arrested six or seven months back for violating the Forest (Conservation) Act, were released by the State Government in order to enable the Government itself or those who were heading the Government, that is, the present Chief Minister, the Chairman of the National Front, to conduct these clandestine activities with impunity. Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister has stated that he was sending some regional committee to inquire into this matter. Sir, why this regional committee? The regional committee will also be under the regional influence. I want the hon. Minister to assure this House that he will send an independent committee from the Centre, consisting of Members of Parliament, officers of the Central Government ...*(Interruptions)*

But, it has to be an independent committee. I would like to know whether the Minister is prepared to send an independent committee to go, enquire and find out what exactly has taken place and whether he will assess the amount of semi-precious stones and gems which have actually been siphoned off from this area. Some reports say that the Number 2 lady, Her Majesty, was presented with gems worth over a crore of rupees.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: How much?

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: Worth over a crore of rupees. I

want to know whether the Minister will also talk to his counterpart in the Home Ministry the Minister of State for Home is here so that a CBI inquiry will be conducted into this. Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would finally mention that it is not the question of using reserved forest area for non-forest purposes. These are all tribal areas. Chintapalli is a tribal area which is actually included in Schedule V. of the Constitution. This has caused a lot of problems and a law and order problem has been created over there. Haawks from different parts of the country come over there to swoop upon gems that have been found there. Murders have been

taking place there. So, it is not just a question of forests being used for non forest purposes, but a different kind of a very unhealthy situation has been created and the entire atmosphere has been vitiated in an area where extremists have also been very very active. Therefore, I would like the hon. Minister to assure me whether he will send a Central committee from here to enquire into this matter and what action the Central Government proposes to take to see that those who were booked earlier and released subsequently, for no ostensible reason or on reasonable ground, be again booked under the said Act and that the people who have indulged in these activities, whoever they may be, are also brought to book and prosecuted as per the provisions of the existing Act.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: It is true that this area has a scramble for all precious stones. In the last two years there have been traders from Orissa and Rajasthan who have gone there with various inducements to the tribals. This is a tribal area, as was rightly mentioned by the hon. Member. There was a time when section 144 had to be imposed there. Sir, we have not set up any regional committee. We have asked our officers in our regional office, our Regional Chief Conservator of Forests, to visit that site. In fact, at this very moment, he is at that site. Sir, I am not clear as to what the

hon. Member means by a Central committee. If he means a team from my Ministry to visit there. I have no objection to that. I will send a team from my Ministry.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: Let an independent team go from here.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, the scope of this question relates to violation of the Forest (Conservation) Act. Now, the value of diamond or the value of precious stones which have been extracted is the business of the Ministry of Mines. They must look at what has been extracted. My limited jurisdiction on this relates to violation of the Forest Act and for that purpose I will be happy to send a team once I have the initial report from the Regional Conservator of Forests I will constitute a team to examine violation of the Forest (Conservation) Act.

Sir, with regard to those who have been let off, having been booked for violation of the Forest (Conservation) Act, I will get more information from the State Government and thereafter on receipt of that information proceed appropriately.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Sir, the Minister has just now said that he is confined to the Forest Act. Sir, under section 3(b) of the Forest Act, anybody indulging in this kind of violation has to be prosecuted. The Minister now says that he will get information from the State Government. Sir, under that section, any officer on anybody directly in charge of this Department has to be prosecuted or arrested. The State Government is obviously, in view of the letter which was read out by my hon. colleague, Shri Kishore Chandra Deo, hand in glove, is conniving with these people because the Chief Conservator of Forests has written a letter. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir. I am on a point of procedure.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: No, Sir. I am not yielding. Please permit me to complete. I have not said anything unparliamentary.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, I am not aware of the facts. But I am on a point of procedure. *(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Sir, she should be allowed to put her question. *(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Sir, I am saying that a letter was produced wherein the State Government has given instructions that these people indulging in violations in the tribal areas in illegal mining should not be interfered with and they should be helped. What kind of information does he expect from this State Government? So, will the Centre take action to prosecute the State Government which is sabotaging the interests of these tribals and * * * * What action will the Central Government take?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Minister. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Mr. Chairman, Sir...

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will call you next.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: No, Sir, I am taking objection to her question. You please permit me, Sir, *(Interruptions)*

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am on a point of procedure. I am on a substantive point of procedure.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Sir, he cannot have a right to take the floor any time he wants. I am waiting. *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: No point of order.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, I am on a substantive point of procedure. Please give me a hearing. I beg of you, Sir. *(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: On every issue, he derails the Question Hour.

* * Not recorded.

श्री दिग्विजय सिंह: जयपाल जी, ये प्वाइंट ऑफ ऑर्डर जब गुजरात के बारे में पूछ रहे थे तब क्यों नहीं उठाया था? अलग-अलग प्वाइंट ऑफ ऑर्डर नहीं होगा।
...(व्यवधान)...

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, I am on a substantive point of procedure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is the procedure in this?

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, this is Rajya Sabha. Rajya Sabha is the Council of States...(Interruptions)

SHRI G. PRATHAPA REDDY: Let the Minister answer.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: He is not an authority on Andhra Pradesh. (Interruptions)

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, she levelled an allegation against the State Government, against the Chief Minister's wife. Is it fair, Sir? Can this be done during the Question Hour, Sir? Sir, this question must be expunged from the record. (Interruptions)

Sir, I stand on a point of procedure. (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Actually the reference to the Chief Minister's wife is not in order. The rest, I think, is a legitimate question. Mr. Minister, please answer.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: All right, Sir.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: These people have no moral authority to say whatever they want to say...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Renuka, please. Let us finish this business. I think, today, the House is caught by some virus.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let the Minister answer.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: If the Chief Minister...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. You have no other say.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: The point arises out of that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am not permitting you. Your two supplementaries are over. I am not permitting you. Please sit down. Now, you please answer, Mr. Minister.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, because of a letter written by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, containing some of the directions of the Chief Minister, which found its way to the newspapers, which found its way for it to have been got in public, there is some apprehension that there is some connivance of some people. (Interruptions)

SHRI MUFTI MOHD. SAYEED: How can you level a charge on the basis of a newspaper report? (Interruptions) You cannot do it. How can you do it without substantiating it? (Interruptions)

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: On the one hand, you are saying that you are obtaining information. On the other hand, you are rushing to conclusions on the basis of Press reports.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: Sir, I am on a point of order. (Interruptions)

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Why are they not letting the Minister to reply? (Interruptions)

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: I am on a point of order, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No point of order during Question Hour. Please sit down. (Interruptions) I am sorry. Let the Minister answer. (Interruptions)

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: They are compromising on their principles.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, I am only trying to say...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please, let the Minister answer.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, I am only trying to dispel the notion of any connivance. I am only saying as to why these notions have arisen. These notions have arisen only because of certain events. Those events, mainly, were: this letter, this direction, from the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, on the basis of a meeting he had with the Chief Minister, was sent to me by the hon. Member, and that has come out in the newspapers. *(Interruptions)* The, subsequently, the same Principal Chief Conservator of Forests was transferred. That is why these notions came about.

SHRI MAKHAN LAL FOTEDAR: Inference. *(Interruptions)* What is the evidence against the Chief Minister? *(Interruptions)*

SHRI KAMAL NATH: This is the only reason why these notions have come about. I am not saying...

SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI: Events speak for themselves.

SHRI MAKHAN LAL FOTEDAR: These are only inferences. *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, please conclude now.

SHRI MAKHAN LAL FOTEDAR: He is drawing inferences.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: I am not, in any way, saying that there was any connivance. There are notions of connivance because of these events. Therefore, when these officers were prosecuted, they were prosecuted by the State Forest Department. When the case was compounded, it was compounded by the State Forest Department. Now, what is the wisdom and force of this kind of compounding of cases? This information I need. This information I do not have. It is only when I receive this information, I can proceed. Then, as I said, I will proceed appropriately.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: Sir, on a point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No point of order, please. Shrimati Renuka Chowdhury. Only one question, please.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Yes, Sir.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: Sir, I want to seek one clarification.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. I have called Shrimati Renuka Chowdhury.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: I want to seek a clarification on a very substantive issue concerning the functioning of the Forest Department. *(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the point is, there are three factors involved here. They are: violation of the Mines Act; violation of the Forest Act and, thirdly, the State Government is accused of being guilty today. To prove their innocence, they have to work hard.

Sir, this is being reported widely in the newspapers. Many of my colleagues were saying as to how one can make allegations on the basis of Press reports. Only this morning, during Question Hour, based on newspaper reports, the Petroleum Minister was being asked whether some persons got LPG distributorship or not.

This is an issue which has come before the public. Questions are being asked. One man dies in this. One life has been lost on the spot of this illegal mining—a merchant from some other State. He was killed on the spot. There is violence. There is the question of law and order involved in this. There is also the question of the State Government's connivance in regard to two illegal programmes which are being conducted. There is a violation of all these Acts.

Sir, the question is: if the State Government is accused, when the State Government is accused of such violations—whoever it is; it may be the Chief Minister or his wife or his

grandmother; I am not interested in that—when the State Government which is the representative of the people is the accused in this, which is the authority which is going to take action? Under what section? How one would deal with this violation?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that the question?

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: This is part (a) of the question. Part (b) of my question is: would you permit a House Committee to take up this issue? This is the point I wanted to make.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Have you finished?

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: I am concluding, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Part (c) of my question is this. There have been reports that diamonds to the tune of, at least, one crore rupees, were given. * * * (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister will answer.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, how does this allegation form part of the Short Notice Question? (Interruptions)

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: I have not said to whom. I am saying that this is being alleged. There is a Rs. 700-crore mining scandal in my State, and there is unrest among the people. And people from other States are flooding to that area. That area is inhabited by tribals, who are being pushed out, who are being harassed and tortured into connivance with them and there is exploitation of human rights going on there. So this is a serious issue.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You sum up your question. Ask your question.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: And the tragedy is, political alliances in that State prevent my hon. colleague from saying anything.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You must pose your question.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: I have posed my question—a, b, c. Now the reply.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, it is true that not one person has died but 12 persons were buried alive in the process of mining operations which have been carried out there. My concern is not of who got the gift or diamonds or whatever it is. I am not concerned with that.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: I am also not concerned.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: My immediate concern is not whether the stones changed hands or not but whether the forest lands have changed hands or not. I am concerned with that. About that I have agreed that I will send a team from my Ministry.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: I have asked for a House Committee.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: About House Committee, it is for the Chairman to constitute it, not for me. House Committee is a larger issue; I am not concerned with it. But I will send a team. Where the question of prosecution is concerned, of course, the Forest (Conservation) Act is very clear on this. On a matter which has brought about such concern and has got such implications, necessary action under the Forest (Conservation) Act will be taken.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: What about mining? There is illegal mining which is compounding this injury.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is answering for Environment, please.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will he refer it to the Ministry of Mines and tell them that this is happening?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: I will certainly send all the papers I have to the Ministry of Mines for appropriate action under the mining laws. But where the Forest (Conservation) Act is concerned, should there be a violation, this team will go there and as soon as I have the report, appropriate action will be taken, including prosecution as provided in the Forest (Conservation) Act.

Increase in Emoluments of Engineering Staff of AIR and DD

2. **SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL:** Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that recently there has been a raise, apart from what the Central Government announced for its employees, in the emoluments of the engineering staff working the AIR and Doordarshan;

(b) whether Government have received any representation about the inadequacy of the raise given to the engineering staff, if so, what is Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) whether any other category of staff of the AIR and Doordarshan has made a demand for the raise in their emoluments, as given to the engineering staff, if so the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO): (a) Yes, Sir. The pay scales of Engineering Assistants (EA) working in AIR/DD have been enhanced to Rs. 2000—3200 consequent upon the judgement delivered by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. However, all the Senior Engineering Assistants (SEAs) who were in the post of EA as on or after 01.01.1978, have also been allowed the

benefit of the higher pay scale of EA, as personal to them on provisional basis.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Other cadres in AIR/DD have voiced their demands for similar increase in their pay scales.

SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL: Sir, my question relates to the problem of employees in the Production wing of Doordarshan and AIR. Now there are two wings—Production wing and Engineering wing. Till now they were enjoying the same emoluments and positions. *..(Interruptions)..*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Silence, please.

SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL: Now, suddenly, by virtue of the order of the Supreme Court referred to in the answer by the hon. Minister, the position has been totally altered. Colleagues who were getting the same salary in the same position—the employees in the Production wing—have become something like 'b' class employees. Therefore, I want to ask of the Minister whether he will be good enough to consider the request made by the employees in the Production Wing of Doordarshan and All India Radio to give the same emoluments and other benefits as are being given to the engineering staff. Thereby, the parity which was existing all along and which has now been disturbed, could be maintained. In this situation, there cannot be a proper, coordinated working. Therefore, I request the hon. Minister to consider favourably this request made by the production staff to give the same benefit to them as the engineering staff are getting.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: Sir, I want to respond to this by saying that I will certainly consider it favourably if it is within my ambit. This episode has not happened suddenly. There was a Madras CAT judgment. Not only the Ministry of I&B but other Ministries of the Government of India, that is, the Finance Ministry and the Department of Personnel and

*Expunged as ordered by the Chair.