

have been complaints of curbs on the freedom of press and on the right of free assembly in Assam during the recent election campaign; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI NIHAR RANJAN LASKAR): (a) There have been some complaints in this regard.

(b) Powers under section 144 Cr. P. C. vest in the Sub-Divisional Magistrates, District Magistrates and the State Government. According to the State Government in view of the difficult law and order situation competent authorities took recourse to Sec. 144 Cr.P.C, as per the local requirements. However, strict instructions were issued to ensure that operation of Section 144 Cr.P.C, does not interfere with peaceful and legitimate election campaign including holding of election meetings. The provisions of the Assam Special Powers (Press) Act, 1960 were invoked by the State Government for preventing and combating activities affecting the maintenance of communal harmony and public order.

#### **Central Ministers' visit to Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka**

©1845. SHRI LADLI MOHAN NIGAM: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the Central Ministers who visited Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka during the last three months; and

(b) the expenditure incurred on their T.A./D.A. relating to the above visits?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI NIHAR RANJAN LASKAR): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

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#### **Conversion of Abusmand area into a National Park**

@@1846. SHRI PYARELAL KHAN-DELWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any scheme under Government's consideration to develop Abusmand area in the Bastar District into a National Park; and

(b) if so, by when this scheme- is likely to be launched?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINH): (a) The Government of Madhya Pradesh proposes to develop Abusmand area in Bastar District as a Protected Area for the conservation of its unique ecosystem.

(b) The proposal is yet to be finalise"

#### **Digital switching technology**

@@@1847. SHRI SAJASHIV BAGAITKAR:

SHRI B. SATYA-NARAYAN REDDY:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that 50 US based Indian scientists have been asked to help produce digital switching technology for India;

(b) whether Government have agreed to pay them of U.S. level while they work in holiday resorts for three months to develop this gear;

(c) whether this is the reason for closing R&D Section which was

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