

should intrude upon the space earmarked for the other. Allow me to recall once again the words of our first Vice President, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, of revered memory, and quote: “A democracy is distinguished by the protection it gives to minorities. A democracy is likely to degenerate into tyranny if it does not allow the Opposition groups to criticize, fairly, freely and frankly, the policies of the Government. At the same time, the minorities also have their responsibilities. While they have every right to criticize, the right of criticism should not degenerate into wilful hampering and obstruction of the work of Parliament. All groups, therefore, have their rights and their responsibilities.” I do venture to hope that all sections of the House would seek to achieve this laudable objective. The manner in which we attend to our business is watched by the citizen body with a discerning eye. I thank you profusely for the warmth of your welcome. Jai Hind.

**FELICITATIONS TO INDIAN SPORTSPERSONS WHO HAVE WON MEDALS
AT LONDON OLYMPICS, 2012**

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, on behalf of the whole House and on my own behalf, I congratulate Shri Vijay Kumar for winning the Silver Medal in the 25m Rapid Fire Pistol Shooting, Shri Sushil Kumar for winning the Silver Medal in the 66 kg Freestyle Wrestling, Shri Gagan Narang for winning the Bronze Medal in the Men's 10m Air Rifle Shooting event, Miss Saina Nehwal for winning the Bronze Medal in the Women's Badminton Singles' event, Miss MC Mary Kom for winning the Bronze Medal in the 51 kg Women's Flyweight Boxing match and Shri Yogeshwar Dutt for winning the Bronze Medal in the 60 kg Men's Freestyle Wrestling match at the recently concluded Olympic Games held at London. By their achievement, these sportspersons have made our country proud in the Comity of Nations. Their example should inspire young people through out the length and breadth of the country to emulate and improve upon their achievement.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Cable digitisation deadline

*42. SHRI A. ELAVARASAN: Will the MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's decision, to extend its earlier cable digitization deadline from June 30 to October 31, is a set back to DTH service providers as it would put a strain on financial health of the industry;

- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government has extended the deadline in the interest of consumers; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (d) Direct to Home (DTH) is a digital platform, whereas the Cable Television Network in India is at present analogue in nature. Government has initiated the process of digitisation of the analogue Cable TV Network in India in four phases, wherein the four Metro cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai were planned to be digitised by 30th June 2012. However the date had to be modified to 31st October 2012 in public interest. The decision to modify the date of digitization of four metros in the first phase to 31st October 2012 does not impact the DTH Industry.

It is estimated that 133 lakhs STBs would be required in the four metro cities where digitisation in the first phase is planned. Ministry has been closely monitoring the availability and installation of STBs in all the four metros. The assessment taken by the Ministry in the month of June 2012 had shown that as against the requirement of 133 Lakhs STBs only about 39.0 Lakh STBs were installed by the Industry. Since more than 94 Lakh people did not have STBs by the end of June 2012, which could have rendered their TV screens blank causing serious inconvenience to consumers on a mass scale, the Ministry had to modify the cut off date of digitization of four metros in the first phase to 31st October 2012 in public interest. Moreover the State Governments of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal had also requested the Ministry to modify the dates in public interest.

Benefites to minorities from Government programmes

*43. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has asked the Ministry to ensure that the five national minorities are being benefited from Government programmes and if so, how;
- (b) whether an external agency is likely to be hired to evaluate the Prime Minister's 15 Point Programme for minorities;
- (c) the disadvantages faced by Muslims who hold about 5 per cent of Government posts; and
- (d) whether the Ministry has been asked to streamline its programmes and root out bottlenecks in schemes such as scholarships?