Amendments in PRB Act

707. SHRI SALIM ANSARI : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering amendments in the Press and Registration of Books Act (PRB) to make paid news in print/electronic media an offence;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) how many cases of paid news in print and electronic media have come to the notice of Government during the last one year with names of newspapers/TV channels?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI MANISH TEWARI) : (a) and (b) Based on the recommendations of the Standing Committee in regard to Press and Registration of Books and Publications Bill, 2011, it is being considered to include the provisions to check the incidents of paid news.

(c) The complaints on paid news related to print media during 2012-13 have been received in Press Council of India.

A few instances related to electronic media have been brought to the notice of Government. Whenever such allegations/grievances/petitions regarding unethical practices and incessant misreporting are received, the Government takes appropriate action as per provisions of the Programme and Advertising Code prescribed under Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and the Rules framed thereunder.

The details in respect of both print and electronic media are being collected.

Portrayal of criminals as great persons in news channels

†708. DR. PRABHA THAKUR : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether many news channels are also assuming the form of entertainment channels and are presenting violent criminals as great persons and models for the young generation by showing sensational incidents and using words like dons, kingpins, underworld king, emperor of the crime world, for seditious criminals which is dangerous for the future of youth;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.