

LOK SABHA

Thursday, 25th September, 1958

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mrs. Joshi in Goa Jail

*1584. **Shri V. C. Shukla:** Will the Prime Minister be pleased to state what steps were taken by Government in the past and what are proposed to be taken now to secure the release of Mrs. Sudha Joshi who has been in Jail in Goa since 1954?

The Deputy Minister of External Affairs (Shrimati Lakshmi Menon): The question of release of Shrimati Sudha Joshi was taken up through diplomatic channels. The nationality certificates of both Shrimati Sudha Joshi and her husband Shri Mahadeo Shastri Joshi have again been forwarded to Portuguese authorities to prove her Indian nationality. We like to hope that the Portuguese will release her soon.

Shri V. C. Shukla: May I know how many Indians are prisoners there apart from Mrs. Joshi?

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: Three more.

Shri V. C. Shukla: Have the Government examined the question of the desirability of raising this question in UNO; if so, whether any decision has been taken in this connection?

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Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: I do not think the Government has taken any decision regarding raising this issue in the United Nations.

Shri Goray: Is it a fact that one of the officers of the Egyptian Embassy is shortly proceeding to Goa to meet these prisoners?

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: Yes, Sir; it is correct.

Shri Goray: Has he been instructed to urge upon the Government there to give more facilities to Mr. Ranade who is in jail and who has been sentenced to 28 years' imprisonment?

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: I cannot tell exactly what the instructions are. I think he will look into the conditions of prisoners and takes care that these people are properly treated.

Shri Assar: May I know whether it is a fact that the Portuguese authorities are unwilling to release her claiming that she is a Goan national? If so, will our Government warn the colonial authorities there that it is futile to attempt to divide the Goans and Indian nationals?

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: I did not understand the latter part of the question.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member will repeat it a little more slowly.

Shri Assar: May I know whether it is a fact that the Portuguese authorities are unwilling to release her claiming that she is a Goan national? If so, will our Government warn the colonial Portuguese authorities that it was futile to attempt to divide Goans and Indian nationals?

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: It is a fact that the Portuguese declined to release Shrimati Sudha Joshi on the ground that she is not an Indian national. So, we produced the nationality certificate of Shrimati Sudha Joshi. Then, they said that unless it is proved that her husband was also an Indian national at the time of the marriage, they cannot consider it. Now, we have also produced the nationality certificate of her husband to prove that he was also an Indian national at the time of the marriage.

Shri B. K. Gaikwad: May I know how many persons there are in jail from India today?

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: I have just answered this question, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Three, I think.

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: Three besides Shrimati Sudha Joshi.

Shri Goray: In view of the fact that Mr. Ranade has been sentenced to 28 years and still he continues to be in the Panjim lockup, will Government instruct this officer of the Egyptian Embassy to take this question up with the Portuguese Government?

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: This question was also answered by me, Sir.

Shri Assar: Is Government aware of a news item that appeared in the last week of July that she had been released on the 6th July? If so, have they tried to find out how this false report was circulated and whether the Portuguese authorities had any hand in it?

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: I do not know how this false rumour was circulated. It was true that there was a newspaper report that Shrimati Sudha Joshi was released. On enquiry, we found that it was not correct.

Prices of Cloth

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*1585. { **Shri Shree Narayan Das:**
Sardar Iqbal Singh:

Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

(a) the trend of prices in the principal cloth markets of India during the last six months;

(b) whether it is a fact that the prices have been constantly falling; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

The Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri Satish Chandra):

(a) The prices of cloth have been fairly steady in the principal markets, the variations being about one per cent.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

Shri Shree Narayan Das: May I know how the prices prevailing now compare with the prices last year during the same period?

Shri Satish Chandra: The weighted average of various prices of coarse, medium, fine and superfine varieties is less this year as compared to the same time last year.

Shri Shree Narayan Das: May I know whether any study has been made as to the reasons why there has been no fall due to the decrease in the excise duties?

Shri Satish Chandra: The excise duties have been readjusted. Concessions have been given in some cases. There has been a slight increase in the cost of fine and superfine cloth; but the prices of coarse and medium cloth have more or less remained stationary.

Shri Ranga: Has it not been brought to the notice of Government by the Handloom Board and also by several organisations of the handloom weavers that the prices of handwoven cloth have been coming down and there has been a huge accumulation of cloth?