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Title : Minister of Tourism and Culture made a statement correcting the reply given on 24.11.2005 to Unstarred Question No. 431 by Shri Kailash Meghwal, M.P. regarding 'Corruption in sending artists to Foreign Countries' and giving reasons for delay in correcting the reply.

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): Sir, in reply to above Lok Sabha Unstarred Question, the reply from (a) to (d) was stated on the basis of the information available in the Ministry on that date. Later, some information has been received from the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Ministry of External Affairs. Accordingly, the following information may be treated as addendum to the reply already given on 24.11.2005.

- (a) Only those artistes who are empanelled with the ICCR are sent to perform in foreign countries based on specific requests received from our Indian Missions in these countries. Full care is exercised in the selection of artistes for any particular cultural troupe keeping in mind his/her professional expertise in the requisite fields.
- (b) and (c) Unfortunately, in the ICCR, there has been one case in September 2005 in which nine Indian artistes of a Bhangra group did not return from Germany.
- (d) The matter is being enquired into by the Central Bureau of Investigation. The investigation by the CBI is still going on as far as sending of nine Indian artists of Bhangra Group to Germany in September, 2005.

The reply to the above mentioned question was prepared on the basis of the Information available in this Ministry. The final information from the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Ministry of External Affairs was received in this Ministry only on 26.7.2006. Therefore, it was not possible to lay a correcting statement in the House within a week.

* Laid on the Table and also placed in Library. See No. LT 4632/06

13.02½ hrs.