

[English]

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE (Vijayawada): Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to bring to the notice of the Government a very ghastly incident which had taken place on the 14th August, 1991, a day just before we were celebrating our Independence Day.

In Nalgonda District, in Chalakurty town, a woman aged 48, Mrs. Muttamma, was stripped naked. She was then forcefully taken to a mandi. There she was asked to stand. Later, she was asked to move about in the streets in that village in broad day light by three persons belonging to upper caste, just because they thought that she was having some connection with an incident in which a boy belonging to the backward class and a girl belonging to an upper caste fell in love with each other. Since their parents did not appreciate their love affairs, they decided to go out of the place.

I would request the Central Government to contact the State Government to see that immediate action is taken against the culprits.

I also suggest that necessary amendment should be brought in the CPC so that stringent punishment could be awarded to the people who play with the chastity of women.

13.40 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

DETAILED DEMANDS FOR GRANTS OF THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND OF UNION TERRITORIES WITHOUT LEGISLATURE FOR 1991-92

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI M.M. JACOB): On behalf of Shri S.B. Chavan,

I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions):-

(1) The Detailed Demands for Grants (Volume-I) of the Ministry of Home Affairs for 1991-92.

[Placed in Library. See No. L.T. 418191]

(2) The Detailed Demands for Grants (Volume-II) of the Ministry of Home Affairs (Union Territories without Legislature) for 1991-92.

[Placed in Library. See No. L.T. 419191]

DETAILED DEMANDS FOR GRANTS OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS FOR 1991-92

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas for 1991-92.

[Placed in Library. See No. L.T. 420191]

MR. SPEAKER: Now, Shri Ajit Kumar Panja to make a statement.

13.41 hrs.

(MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair)

13.42 hrs

STATEMENT BY MINISTER Prices of Imported Newsprint

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): As the Hon'ble Members are aware the recent increase in the price of imported newsprint has been agitating the minds of Hon'ble Members as well as the newspaper industry. The newspaper establishments had protested against the sudden hike in the prices of imported newsprint, more particularly, the burden of about Rs. 60 crore which was proposed to be passed on to them. The S.T.C. had proposed to raise the prices of standard newsprint by Rs. 4,670/- per

MT and that of glazed newsprint by Rs. 10,410/- per MT. These increases in the prices of newsprint were proposed by STC in the wake of effects of the exchange rate adjustment particularly on the accumulated past liabilities in foreign exchange. The newspaper industry was not prepared to bear the burden. This had led to an impasse while big newspapers claimed that this increase would lead to sharp increase in the prices of newspapers and their advertisement tariff, many small and medium newspapers apprehended closure.

2. A number of consultations were held between the Government, the S.T.C and the Newspaper Industry over the past two weeks. After several rounds of such consultations and dialogue, the matter has been resolved at the Newsprint Price Fixation Advisory Committee meeting held on 16th August, 1991 on mutually agreed cost-sharing basis between the Industry and the S.T.C. We are grateful to our Prime Minister for sparing valuable time to resolve this impasse. While the prices of imported standard newsprint will continue to be Rs. 16,000/- per MT, and that of glazed newsprint Rs. 23,000/- per MT, the newspaper establishments will pay an additional amount of Rs. 800/- per MT on standard newsprint and Rs. 2,300/- per MT on glazed newsprint as a one time surcharge. This will be recovered on a total quantity of 2,50,000 Tonnes of standard newsprint and 40,000 Tonnes of glazed newsprint.

3. Government are committed to the healthy growth of the press. It is on account of this commitment that newsprint has been considered as an essential commodity and the gap between the domestic production and total requirements is met through imports. While the indigenous production has remained static at the level of about 2.8 lakh Tonnes per year, the demand for newsprint has been going up. The country is now importing 40% to 45% of the total newsprint requirements. While efforts have to be made for encouraging the installation of additional capacities for the production of indigenous newsprint,

all users will have to apply themselves to conserve this scarce commodity and try to optimise its utilisation. Government have received demands from some sections of the Press, more particularly, the big newspapers for the decanalisation of newsprint import. While the Government would not stand in the way of decanalisation, our response to this demand will necessarily be conditioned by our overriding concern for the interests of the Small and Medium Newspapers, which cannot individually organise the import of newsprint.

4. Government have already set up a Committee to recommend new rate structure for Government advertisements. In the meanwhile, keeping in view the recent hike in the newsprint prices, Government have decided to increase the rates of Government advertisements by 18% as an interim measure. It will be effective from 1st August, 1991.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 421191]

13.44 hrs

Announcement Re: Nomination of a Member to the Panel of Chairmen

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now I have to inform the House that under Rule 9 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, the Hon. Speaker has nominated Shri Ram Naik as a Member of the Panel of Chairmen.

Now we shall take up matters under Rule 377.

13.45 hrs

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

- (i) **Need to set up Agro-based Industries in Mohindergarh District, Haryana and also to earmark funds for exploration of minerals in the region**

[English]

RAO RAM SINGH (Mohindergarh): It has been the policy of the Government to bring about uniform development throughout the country and to give preference and priority to the backward and undeveloped areas. In pursuance of