

primarily the responsibility of the State Governments to maintain public order through the machinery of police agencies. However, the Central Government have issued detailed guidelines from time to time for providing necessary protection and security to journalists.

These guidelines, *inter-ali*, provides for taking effective action for protection and security of jour analysis whenever the situation so demands. They also provide for prompt registration of criminal cases against persons committing or trying to commit against journalists.

Inter-Caste Marriages

574. SHRI P.P. KALIPAERUMAL: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have any scheme to encourage inter-caste marriages i order to speed up casteless society in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether some benefit it is being given by the Government to the inter-caste married persons; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI): (a) to (d). There is no separate Centrally Sponsored Scheme to promote inter- caste marriages to speed up casteless society in the country. However, States like Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Goa have schemes for promotion such marriages. These States give incentives to couples who enter with inter-caste marriages, where either of the spouse belongs to SCs. The incentives so provided varies from State to State.

Shortage of Natural Gas

575. DR. D. VENKATESWARA RAO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have drawn up a contingency plan to tackle the shortage of natural gas expected during 1993-94;

(b) if so, the details of the proposed plan;

(c) by what time it is likely to be implemented; and

(d) to what extent it will help to meet the shortage of natural gas in the country?

THE MINSTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH KUMAR SHARMA): (a) to (d). Some shortage in availability of natural gas are likely to occur in some regions for which contingency plans have been drawn up. These plan envisage use of alternate fuels by those units which have such capability, holding in abeyance gas allocations to units which have not made investment interruption of supplies to fallback consumers when necessary, gas. These mesurs are expected to enable a least disruptive management of temporary shortfalls in availability.

[*Translation*]

National Leprosy Eradication Programme

576. SHRI BALRAJ PASSI:
SHRI CHINMAYANAND
SWAMI:
SHRIMATI KRISHNENDRA
KAUR:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state: