

# LOK SABHA DEBATES

## LOK SABHA

Thursday, April 15, 1999/Chaitra 25,  
1921 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at  
Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

REFERENCE RE : EARTHQUAKE IN  
SEVERAL PARTS OF NORTH INDIA,  
ESPECIALLY GARHWAL REGION

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Members, I have to make a reference to a recent traedy which affected several parts of North India, especially the Garhwal region.

As the House is aware, a major earthquake that hit the Garhwal hills on the 29th March, 1999, left a trail of death and destruction in its wake. A large number of people including women and children were reported to have been killed, injured and rendered homeless. Chamoli, Gopeshwar, Rudraprayag, Joshimath and Ukhimath were badly hit. Relief work is already going on.

The House may join me in expressing our deep sorrow and sympathies to the affected families; and may now stand in silence for a short while as a mark of respect to the deceased.

11.01 hrs.

*The Members then stood in silence for a short while.*

SHRI INDER KUMAR GUJRAL (Jalandhar) : I join this feeling that you have expressed about the earthquake victims. May I suggest that this House unanimously decides that we donate our one day's salary and allowances to the relief fund for the Garhwal region...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI GANGA CHARAN RAJPUT (Hamir Pur) (U.P.) : One month's salary should be given. Our party is ready for this.

[English]

PROF. P.J. KURIEN (Mavelikara) : I support Shri Gujral.

THE MINISTER OF POWER, MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM) : We have no problem. One day's salary and allowance is all right. We have agreed to donate one month's salary from our side.

SHRI INDER KUMAR GUJRAL (Jalandhar) : If you have agreed to donate one month's salary, I endorse that also.

11.02 hrs.

MOTION RE : SUSPENSION OF  
QUESTION HOUR

THE MINISTER OF POWER, MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM) : Sir, may I request through you to suspend the Question Hour under rule 388 so that this House may take up the discussion on the Motion of Confidence in the Council of Ministers, notice of which is already given by the hon. Prime Minister.

I beg to move :

"That this House do suspend Rule 32 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha in so far as it provides for the first hour of sitting being made available for the asking and answering of questions, in order to take up the Motion of Confidence.

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That this House do suspend Rule 32 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha in so far as it provides for the first hour of sitting being made available for the asking and answering of questions, in order to take up the Motion of Confidence.

*The motion was adopted...*

## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

### 2-3 Persons Engaged in Beedi Industry

\*341. DR. ULHAS VASUDEO PATIL :

SHRI PRASAD BABURAO TANPURE :

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated number of persons engaged in the beedi industry at present State-wise;

(b) whether most of the persons in this industry belong to scheduled castes/scheduled tribes and backward classes and women;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether permission has been granted by the Government for manufacturing of small cigarettes in competition with beedis;

(e) if so, whether beedi producers have suffered losses due to manufacturing of small cigarettes; and

(f) if so, the steps taken by the Union Government to see the interests of beedi industries and the workers?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA) : (a) There are about 44-lakh beedi workers in the country.

(b) and (c) According to a recent sample survey conducted by Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour, the percentage of persons belonging to Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and OBC categories engaged in beedi making is 15.2%, 3.3% and 43.3% respectively. As per the same survey, the women in the factory worker category and home worker category constitute about 50% and 68% respectively, of the total workers engaged in beedi making.

(d) to (f) The cigarette manufacture requires Industrial Licence under the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act, 1951. The licence so issued under this provision does not, however, specify the length of cigarette. Industrial licences for the manufacture of cigarettes are granted in terms of number and not lengthwise. The differentiation on the basis of length of cigarette is relevant for the purpose of excise duty.

The Government have received representations from beedi manufacturers and beedi workers suggesting increase in the rate of excise duty on the non-filter cigarettes of length not exceeding 60 mm on the ground that the level of excise on such cigarettes is having adverse impact on beedi industry. The rate of excise duty on such cigarettes has been increased from Rs. 60/- per thousand in 1994-95 to Rs. 75/- per thousand in 1996-97, to Rs. 90/- per thousand in 1997-98, and to Rs. 100/- per thousand in 1998-99. In the budget for the year 1999-2000, the rate of excise duty on such cigarettes has been fixed at Rs. 110/- per thousand sticks.

### Railway Reservation Terminals to Private Agencies

\*342. SHRI N.K. PREMCHANDRAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to grant

Railway Reservation Terminal to private agencies; and

(b) if so, the reasons and advantages thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI NITISH KUMAR) : (a) and (b) There is a proposal to provide Passenger Reservation System (PRS) terminals on an experimental basis to travel agents authorised under Rail Tourist Agents Scheme and Rail Travellers Service Agents Scheme of the railways at the party's cost and with suitable safeguards etc. in order to facilitate rail reservation to common man. The provision of this facility would result in availability of more reservation counters, reduced waiting time for purchasing tickets, etc.

### 4-9 *Railways* Summer special trains

\*343. SHRI C. KUPPUSAMI :

SHRI SADASHIVRAO DADODA MANDLIK:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to introduce Summer Special trains to meet the extra rush of passengers during Summer seasons;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with their starting and terminating place, zone-wise;

(c) whether coaches of all categories are likely to be provided in long distance trains, specially South bound trains;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether catering arrangements including pantry cars are likely to be provided with all the long distance trains; and

(f) if so, the details thereof, and if not, the alternative catering arrangements made for long distance passengers on board?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI NITISH KUMAR) : (a) to (d) Around 2270 Summer Special trains will run on 40 popular routes from 10th April to end of June 1999 having the following classes of accommodation. viz. Ordinary 11nd class, Sleeper Class, Chair car, 1st class, AC. Chair Car, Executive Chair Car and AC 2-tier. Further augmentation of coaches in at least 68 popular trains is also being done during the summer season. As is evident from the data below, highest number of Summer Specials so far will be run during the current year.