

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2161

ANSWERED ON:14.03.2007

RACIST REMARK IN TV SHOW

Athawale Shri Ramdas;Barad Shri Jashubhai Dhanabhai;Masood Shri Rasheed;Rao Shri Sambasiva Rayapati;Thakkar Smt. Jayaben B.;Thomas Shri P.C.;Yadav Shri Baleshwar

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a bollywood actress was allegedly subjected to racist remarks in the British TV reality show 'Big Brother';
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (c) whether the Government has taken up this issue with the British Government;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the response of the British Government thereto?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE)

(a) & (b) No. According to some initial media reports alleged 'racist' remarks had been directed at Ms. Shilpa Shetty (Indian actress, who was participating in the reality show 'Celebrity Big Brother' on Channel 4, UK) by her co-contestants.

However, on January 18, 2007, Ms. Shilpa Shetty was herself quoted as telling the programme organisers "I don't feel there was any racial discrimination". Again in an interview on the Sky News on February 1, 2007, she was quoted as saying "I think it stemmed from jealousy, maybe insecurity, you know, but definitely wasn't contrived racism."

(c)-(e) Yes. On January 18, 2007, in view of the controversy as reported in the media, Ministry of External Affairs took up the matter with the British High Commission in New Delhi and asked the British Government to take action under its laws. British Prime Minister Tony Blair, speaking in the House of Commons on January 17, 2007, said: "We should oppose racism in all its forms. I want Britain to be seen as a country of fairness and tolerance. Anything detracting from this I condemn".