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Title: Statement regarding issue of Sarabjit Singh, an Indian National in Pakistan custody.

*THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE):

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I rise to inform Hon'ble members of the issue of Sarabjit Singh, an Indian national in Pakistani custody facing a death sentence. The media have reported that his mercy petition has been turned down by the President of Pakistan. We have received no formal intimation of this from the Government of Pakistan. But according to press reports, the black warrant has been issued and the sentence will be carried out on 1st April 2008. Our High Commission in Islamabad has sought details from the Government of Pakistan.

The Supreme Court of Pakistan, in a judgement on 18 August 2005 had upheld award of death sentence to Sarabjit Singh for causing explosions at various places in Pakistan. At our instance, Consular access to Sarabjit Singh was provided by Government of Pakistan for the first time on August 30, 2005 to the Indian High Commission. Thereafter his national status was confirmed. A review petition against the death sentence was also filed in the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The petition was dismissed by the Supreme Court in March 2006. A mercy petition was thereafter filed with the President of Pakistan which now, according to news reports, has been turned down. Throughout this period, Government of India have continued to urge the Government of Pakistan to take a sympathetic and humanitarian view of this issue

Hon'ble. Members are aware that since my January 2007 visit to Pakistan, both Governments have put in place certain institutional arrangements, including a new Agreement on Consular Access and a joint Judicial Committee, in order to facilitate the resolution of the consular issues. A delegation of the family members

of missing Indian defence personnel was also able to visit Pakistan last year. These initiatives may lead to an improvement of the situation for our prisoners.

It is in this context and in the same spirit that we appeal to the Government of Pakistan to treat Sarabjit Singh's case with clemency on humanitarian grounds. ...(*Interruptions*)

(Placed in library, see no. LT-8431/08)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, Papers to be laid on the Table of the House.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Hon. Members, first let me complete the business of the Papers to be laid on the Table of House. After that, I would listen to you.

...(*Interruptions*)

श्री रामजीलाल सुमन (फ़िरोज़ाबाद) : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, मुझे इसके बारे में कुछ निवेदन करना है। ...(व्यवधान)

SHRI PRAIYA RANJAN DASMUNSHI: It is not a convention. ...(*Interruptions*)

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय: पेपर्स ले होने के बाद आपको जो कहना हो, कह सकते हैं।

â€!(व्यवधान)

श्री प्रियरंजन दासमुंशी: स्टेटमेंट के ऊपर इस हाउस में बहस नहीं होती है। हर किसी को बयान देने का अधिकार है। बात सुनने के बाद जो भी कार्रवाई करनी होगी, हम करेंगे। ...(व्यवधान)

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय: पहले मुझे पेपर्स ले करवाने दीजिए। उसके बाद आप अपनी बात कह सकते हैं।

â€!(व्यवधान)

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय : पहले पेपर ले कराने दीजिए।

â€¦(लवधान)

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय : पहले पेपर ले कराने दीजिए फिर मैं आपकी बात सुनूंगा।

â€¦(लवधान)

श्री प्रियरंजन दासमुंशी : आपकी बात ढंग से सुनेंगे।... (लवधान)