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Title: Regarding increasing incidents of persons being taken hostage by Maoists in several States.

SHRI BAIJAYANT PANDA (KENDRAPARA): Sir, thank you for giving me this opportunity to raise the issue of Left Wing Extremism which has taken a very serious turn recently.

While incidents of Left Wing Terrorism including deaths and violent incidents have a trend of coming down over the last few years, a serious turn has taken place now whereby there are rising incidents of hostage-taking. We need to come up with a national consensus of how to deal with this. Hostage situations also exist with pirates and with other scenarios, but with Left Wing Extremists taking hostages, we still do not have a coordinated national policy. Sir, there is criticisms when there are hostage-negotiations. The fact remains that many countries which have a policy against negotiating, also sometimes negotiate because while negotiating may have consequences, not-negotiating also can have very serious consequences.

I would like to conclude by saying that perhaps we ought to evolve a policy that for minor crimes for those Maoists and others who are held up in jail for a long period of time, their bail hearings could be expedited so that they should not be stuck in jail for a long time without being heard; it may not be for hardcore people with allegations of murder and other such charges. But we know that not just Maoists, but across the country with ordinary people with lesser charges, there are thousands of people who are stuck in jail for a long time without their cases being heard. It is high-time that we evolve a national policy to expedite these cases and release them from jail where justified, and also to come up with a policy regarding negotiations so that individual States may not go in divergent ways. We should have a national consensus on this.