

indirect taxes. Mr. Chirman, Sir, this is quite strange. If you allot such a limited time, how is it going to help? I want to tell you that you are not going to gain anything by raising taxes, because its burden would fall on the poor, who are already overburdened. The entire revenue which you mobilise through taxation is usurped by the middlemen and its benefit does not reach the villagers. Mr. Chairman Sir, as you are ringing the bell repeatedly, I would only submit that instead of raising the taxes, if you tone up the administration, it can benefit you considerably and crores of rupees can become available to you in the process. If you go on increasing taxes, it will not yield any result but on the contrary, it will lead to increase in black money which already exists in huge quantity in our country and is swelling by crores of rupees every year.

15.00 hrs.

STATEMENT *RE* DISAPPEARANCE
OF MR. IGOR GUEJA AN OFFI-
CIAL OF U. S. S. R. EMBASSY

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN) :
Sir, I would like to inform Hon.
Members about the latest development
relating to the disappearance last week of
Mr. Igor Gueja, Attache in the Informa-
tion wing of the Embassy of the USSR in
New Delhi.

An official of the USSR Embassy had reported to the Delhi Police authorities on the evening of Sunday, March 17, that Mr. Gezha had left his residence early that morning for the Lodhi Gardens for his customary walk, and not returned. The official expressed anxiety over this and conveyed the USSR Embassy's request for assistance of the Government of India in locating Mr. Gezha's whereabouts. The matter was also formally brought to the notice of the Minister of External Affairs, the next morning, by the USSR Embassy.

An intensive search was launched by the Police authorities to ascertain the

whereabouts of the missing Soviet diplomat. All possible measures in this regard had been taken by them over the last week, but had not yielded any results.

Meanwhile, the USSR Embassy had been conveying its anxiety that something untoward may have happened to Mr. Gezha. They also indicated on the night of March 23rd, the possibility that he might be in the premises of the US Embassy in New Delhi.

In view of the gravity of the apprehensions expressed by the Soviet Embassy and Government's own serious concern to establish the facts of the case, we then asked for an urgent clarification in this regard from the US Embassy.

In response to our query, the US Embassy conveyed of the Minister of External Affairs yesterday March 24 that "an employee of the Soviet Embassy Information Department in New Delhi had sought and been granted political asylum by the US Government at a point outside India", and further, that "he is safe and well in the USA". This information was thereafter conveyed by us the same day to the USSR Embassy.

We have made known our serious concern to the US Government about this incident and asked them to let us have full details surrounding it. Government of India are also examining all aspects of the case as to how an official of the Soviet Embassy could have left India clandestinely, in the circumstances mentioned above.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Basirhat) :
Mr. Chairman, I want to seek a small clarification from the hon. Minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN : It is not permissible under the rules at this stage.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : You should also follow some precedents and not strictly the rules.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The rules of the House prevail over the precedents and the rule on this point is very clear.