

Denial of Advertisement to certain Newspapers etc.

*22. SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) names of the daily, weekly and other periodicals to whom advertisements were suspended by the former Government; and

(b) whether the suspension orders have been cancelled?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI L. K. ADVANI): (a) A list of newspapers whose advertisements remained discontinued as on 20-3-1977 is laid on the Table of the House. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-100-77].

(b) Each case is being examined on merits for revocation of the suspension orders, especially those issued on political grounds. Orders in 81 cases out of 100 have already been reviewed and rescinded.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYA: May I know what is actually the basis of review or what are the points that are considered while reviewing these cases?

SHRI L. K. ADVANI: As I have already stated in my reply, where it seems almost obvious that the discontinuance of advertisements to a newspaper or a journal has been politically motivated or was because of the independent views of that paper, the review has already been done and orders have been rescinded. It has not been difficult to see that the *status quo ante* as existed in June 1975 is restored. But I may point out that in certain cases where the stoppage of advertisements is because of the scurrilous content of any paper, there the Government would have a different view. Therefore, out of 100 cases that were brought to me till

now, in 81 cases orders have been rescinded.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYA: May I know whether the list that has been given here is complete? So far my knowledge goes the monthly papers to which the advertisements come from the Government agencies were stopped. 'EK SHATHE' is one such Bengali Journal published by a women organisation in West Bengal. There is another paper called JAISHRI. May I request the Minister to look into the cases of the papers in whose cases ban was imposed by the previous Government? Will he see that these cases are looked into immediately and necessary steps undertaken to sanction advertisements to these papers?

SHRI L. K. ADVANI: I would be grateful if any hon. Member points out specific cases. I will certainly look into them.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY: Man is a political animal. The Minister is a politician. May I know whether he is going to rise above politics and to do justice to every paper in the country?

SHRI L. K. ADVANI: We are committed to the policy of not discriminating against anyone on political grounds.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY: May I know whether some newspapers were driven to the stage of starvation, let alone, not being granted advertisements? I can quote the example of *Motherland* for instance. May I know whether the Government is going to make amends for the action of the previous Government, which drove such newspapers to extinction? Also, may I know whether the Government will institute an inquiry into the whole action of the previous Government vis-a-vis the *Motherland*?

SHRI L. K. ADVANI: I have already indicated the position in my reply and I have given the list about papers where this action was taken during the emergency. The date is given as 20th March. This includes papers like Motherland and Organiser, which were not granted advertisements even before emergency.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYA: The question relates to stopping of advertisements not relating to any particular period.

So, upto now what is the position about granting of advertisements? That might be answered by the hon Minister.

श्री हुकम चन्द कठवाय : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं आप के माध्यम से माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूँ—क्या यह बात सत्य है कि आपातस्थिति के बीच में एक गैर-सरकारी व्यक्ति, जो बेहूदा और मुख्य व्यक्ति था, संजय गांधी—उस के भाषणों और पांच सूत्री कार्यक्रमों के विज्ञापन बहुत बड़े पैमाने पर छपवाये गये, इस के लिए समाचार पत्रों को कितने रुपये के विज्ञापन दिये गये—क्या आप इस की जानकारी देंगे ?

SHRI L. K. ADVANI: I require notice for this question.

श्री कपूरी ठाकुर : अध्यक्ष महोदय मेरा प्वाइन्ट आफ आर्डर है, इस सदन में किसी व्यक्ति को, वह चाहे कोई भी व्यक्ति हो, क्या उस को बेहूदा कहना पार्लिय मेन्ट्री है ?

MR. SPEAKER: It is question hour now. There is no point of order now. Of course such language must be avoided. I would say, there is no point of order. But such language must be avoided.

चौधरी बलबोहर सिंह : बेहूदे को बेहूदा कहने में क्या हर्ज है ?

श्री श्यामनन्दन मिश्र : नहीं कहना चाहिए, बुरी बात है ।

श्री हुकम चन्द कठवाय : यह गाली तो नहीं है, संसदीय शब्द है ।

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Kachwai, you are now a very very senior Member. Shri Mishra.

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA: Sir, may we know whether Government is also examining cases in which undue favours and patronage were shown to certain newspapers and whether Government is contemplating to formulate a comprehensive policy on advertisement including private advertisement?

SHRI L. K. ADVANI: Sir, this is a very important matter and I am looking into the entire gamut of advertisement policy of the Government. What the hon. Member pointed out is correct. On the basis of certain norms that were created during emergency only, there has been some favour shown to certain papers and discrimination against the other papers. I would see to it that the new policy of the Government in respect of advertisement is fair and even-handed.

MR. SPEAKER: The question was whether you will place it on the Table of the House after you take a decision.

SHRI L. K. ADVANI: The moment I take a decision, I shall place it on the Table of the House.

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA: Sir, the newly appointed Minister is very enthusiastic in pronouncing Government's policy on this issue. Because he has made a categorical statement on reviewing the whole situation, I would like to know—of course, we are not denying the fact as far as freedom of the press is concerned—whether the attitude of the Govern-

ment is to encourage yellow journalism in this country? (Interruptions) Sir, he made a statement that there was no discrimination.

MR. SPEAKER: Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan.

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA: Sir, is it not a relevant question?

MR. SPEAKER: I do not think that it is a relevant question.

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA: Sir, I seek your protection in this. My specific question to the Minister is this. Is it the attitude of this Government to encourage yellow journalism in this country?

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Lakkappa, I have already called Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan.

SHRIMATI PARVATHI KRISHNAN: Sir, May I draw the attention of the Minister to this fact that pressure was brought on the advertisers not to advertise in the papers that were critical of certain actions of the previous Government at that time? Would he make an enquiry into that and see that newspapers are protected from that kind of discrimination?

SHRI L. K. ADVANI: Sir, as I said earlier there have been certain things happening during the last nineteen months which we did not regard as correct. We would like to remedy them. But the process of remedy has to be initiated on the basis of specific complaints. That cannot be a general thing.

As far as general thing is concerned, I only said that the entire policy about advertising is being looked into and a comprehensive statement would be placed before the House.

As the hon. Member has just now pointed out, if all such instances are brought to my notice where pressure

had been exercised on any advertiser, whether in writing or orally, I shall certainly have the matter looked into and proper action will be taken.

Naxalite Prisoners

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*23. SHRI PRADYUMNA BAL:
SHRIMATI PARVATHI
KRISHNAN:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Naxalite prisoners detained in various jails in the country; and

(b) whether Government propose to review their cases and release such prisoners against whom there are no specific charges or against whom false charges have been preferred?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (CHAUDHURI CHARAN SINGH): (a) According to information received from State Governments, as on 25-3-1977, 645 Naxalites are under detention in Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

(b) Yes, Sir. The State Governments are being advised to release all such Naxalites in detention except in cases where such detentions had been made on account of their recent indulgence in violent activities. The State Governments are being further advised that investigation and trial of cases involving Naxalites may be expedited.

SHRI PRADYUMNA BAL: Sir, the Hon'ble Home Minister has mentioned about only 645 Naxalite prisoners in the country. My information is that there are a large number of Naxalite prisoners who may be more than the number which the hon. Home Minister has mentioned. For examine, there are quite a number of prisoners in Orissa, Bihar and to so many other places. I think they have