

inquire into the matter.

**PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE:** Sir, I am glad that he has responded positively, but in order that he should be able to collect the report, the name of the person is Kailash Satyarathi of the Bonded Labour Liberation Front. He was an eye witness to the episode and I will request the hon. Minister to contact this organisation, they have printed the report, get that report and try to find out whether it is correct.

**SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA:** I have got the name of the person and other things also. I will ask my officer who goes to inquire, to meet them and to verify from them also.

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#### SHORT NOTICE QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

#### **News Item about Ramayana Serial**

S.N. Q2. **SHRI V. TULSIRAM:** Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have seen a news item appearing in the Hindustan Times dated 11 November, 1987 captioned "Ramayana anti-secular";

(b) if so, the reaction of Government in this regard;

(c) whether it is also a fact that such an expression about Ramayana has injured the sentiments of a large population in the country; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to stop such expressions?

[*English*]

**THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE**

**MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI A.K. PANJA):** (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government does not agree with the views expressed in the news item as the serial 'Ramayana' lays stress on the literary, aesthetic, and ethical aspects of the great epic.

(c) and (d). It is an individual opinion and should be seen as such. No action is, therefore, called for.

[*Translation*]

**SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD:** What one man says does not matter.

**SHRI V. TULSIRAM:** Sir, the Indian National Congress celebrated its golden jubilee in Goa. Dr. Jha who is Head of Delhi University's History Department, while speaking on the occasion, said that T.V. serial 'Ramayana' is not secular. So I would like to know from the hon. Minister that every religion is given protection by the Government but to be born as a Hindu....

(*Interruptions*)

**SHRI RAM NAGINA MISHRA:** Sir, on a point of order .

(*Interruptions*)

**MR. SPEAKER:** There is no point of order in question hour.

**SHRI RAM NAGINA MISHRA:** So please allow us to ask the question, there should be some alternative.

**SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, if that Jha has said this, I being Azad Jha say that it is secular. I too am a Jha. One Jha had said that but I am Azad Jha. I mean to say that that Jha was a slave.

SHRI V. TULSIRAM: It is alright if you say so, but why has the Government not contradicted it? This is what I want to ask from the government.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD: You are right to that extent.

[*English*]

SHRI A.K. PANJA: Sir, the question of construction by the Government, we thought, does not arise for this reason. We are in a democratic country; every individual has got a right to pass his opinion. Except that particular opinion, we have collected all other opinions from politicians, from other historians, from scientists, from artists and persons in various walks of life. Everybody has said that he does not agree with the opinion expressed by this History Congress. In fact, that very report contains that the students there in Goa objected to this Conference because large sums of money were being spent in that conference when the whole country is suffering.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: How is that relevant, Sir?

MR. SPEAKER: Distortion of history is also made by people, you see.

[*Translation*]

SHRI V. TULSIRAM: Why the Honourable Minister, has not contradicted the statement published in the press at that time. Today he is saying it in this House.

MR. SPEAKER: You have asked only today.

SHRI V. TULSIRAM: Do you think it will be over if I don't ask?

MR. SPEAKER: People understand

everything.

SHRI V. TULSIRAM: One Mr. Jha says "yes" and the other Mr. Jha says "No" and so we accept it.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: In this way the world goes on.

[*English*]

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: One minute, Sir, One clarification. I think, this is the general view of the entire House. There is nothing wrong in coexistence of all the religions and freedom to all the religions, if consistent with freedom. Therefore, there is nothing wrong in depicting various epics representing various religions. There is nothing wrong in it. Why do the Government not say categorically that secularism does not mean irreligious. It only means, peaceful co-existence of all the religions. And there cannot be anything wrong in it.

MR. SPEAKER: We agree.

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#### WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

##### Fourth Pay Commission Recommendation on Rates of Insurance Covers

\*310. SHRI HAFIZ MOHD. SIDDIQ: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the Fourth Pay Commission recommended that the rates of subscription and the insurance cover under the Central Government Employees Group Insurance Scheme may be increased by 50%; and

(b) If so, the details of the action taken