

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS**

RAJYA SABHA

QUESTION NO 21.04.2010

ANSWERED ON

HIGHWAY TO SIKKIM CLOSED DUE TO PUBLIC AGITATION .

2822

Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-

- (a) whether it is a fact that the National Highway to reach Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim, goes via Siliguri, West Bengal;
- (b) whether the highway remains shut continuously due to one or the other public agitation thereby throwing public life in Sikkim out of gear and traffic mostly held up;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the demands of the public agitation;
- (d) whether Government has taken any steps for the smooth passage on this highway; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

(SHRI AJAY MAKEN)

(a) to (e): The movement of traffic on National Highway-31A connecting Gangtok with the rest of India gets disrupted whenever there is a strike/demonstration in West Bengal portion of this highway. Whenever reports in this regard are received, the Ministry of Home Affairs advises State Governments of West Bengal and Sikkim to take suitable measures to ensure smooth movement of traffic on this highway. Ministry of Home Affairs has provided adequate number of personnel of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) to Govt. of West Bengal for ensuring smooth movement to traffic on West Bengal portion of this highway. This issue was also brought before Hon'ble Supreme Court of India through Writ Petition (Civil) No. 354 of 2005. The Hon'ble Supreme Court on the 3rd July, 2008 issued interim direction to Union of India and the State of West Bengal and Sikkim to take measures that are necessary to ensure free traffic movement and undisrupted movement of people on this highway. Subsequently, some organizations who are alleged to be obstructing movement of traffic on NH-31A, also got themselves impleaded as respondents in this Writ Petition. While disposing of this Writ Petition, the Hon'ble Supreme Court on the 25th January, 2010 directed that its interim order dated 3rd July, 2008 would also be applicable to the respondent organizations and that any lapse in following these directions would have serious consequences including the detection of office bearers of the respondent organizations, who are found responsible for disruption of traffic on this highway.