

Therefore, what I mean to say is that judges should be paid handsome salaries and provided with good accommodation, transport and library facilities only then they can perform their duty honestly and properly otherwise, it will be very difficult for them to do their job properly...*(Interruptions)* Besides, security arrangements for them are necessary.

Shri Guman Mal Lodha who is an hon. judge, sitting before us in this House. He has been a judge in the High Court of Assam and Rajasthan. During his tenure he has given judgements assuming a post card as a petition and in some case, he has given judgements even on the basis of news items published in a newspaper.

16.00 hrs.

This is an example of a judge and the Judiciary against whom some hon. Members were passing remarks. I think that the Members of Parliament have no right to pass remarks on the functioning of judges. Whenever injustice has been committed against anybody in the country, Judiciary has done well. Therefore, I would like to request that an All India Judicial Service should be constituted. The situation of today is that, I have got a document according to which, there are many places in the country where the posts of judges are lying vacant. I do not want to waste the time of the House by reading out this document.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Would you kindly resume your seat? I think, at 4 o'clock, there is another subject to be taken up. You can continue tomorrow.

Now, hon. Minister Shri Maqbool Dar to make a statement of the incidents of death of pilgrims at Ujjain and Hardwar on 15th July, 1996.

16.01 hrs.

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER

Incidents of death of Pilgrims at Ujjain and Hardwar

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD MAQBOOL DAR) : Sir, during the course of discussion in the Lok Sabha on July 16 the hon. Home Minister shared the concern of the hon. Members on the heavy loss of life which took place at Ujjain and Hardwar, and had promised to obtain information from both the State Governments.

The State Government of Madhya Pradesh has informed that on July 15 a large crowd of devotees had gathered at the Mahakaleshwar Temple, situated in Ujjain City, at around 5.30 a.m. There were about 3000 persons in the temple premises and another 6000 to

7000 persons at queue outside the temple. The stampede occurred at the feet of a staircase leading to the temple sanctum where the pilgrims rushed for worship. The immediate cause of stampede seems to have been some persons slipping on the wet marble floor. It was reported that 34 persons were declared dead on arrival at the Ujjain civil hospital. These included 23 males including one child and 11 females. 29 persons were admitted to hospital with injuries of whom seven were reported to be seriously injured. Six of the seriously injured have since been shifted to the medical college hospital at Indore for specialised medical treatment. The State Government of Madhya Pradesh has announced a high level administrative inquiry into the causes of this incident which will be conducted by a judicial official. The terms of reference of the inquiry include the causes of the tragedy, the adequacy of arrangements made by the district authorities, the promptness with which medical assistance was provided and steps to be taken in future to prevent recurrence of such incident. The State Government has announced ex-gratia payment of Rs 1 lakh to the dependents of each person killed in the stampede, Rs.25,000 to those who were seriously injured and Rs 10,000 to other injured persons. Their medical expenses will also be met by the State Government. While it is expected that the responsibility for administrative lapses will be fixed by the high level administrative inquiry, the State Government has, in the meantime, transferred the City Superintendent of Police, Ujjain, the Town Inspector in-charge of the temple area and the Executive Magistrate on duty.

In so far as the incident at Hardwar is concerned, the State Government of Uttar Pradesh had informed that 20 pilgrims died and six pilgrims were injured on July 15. It was expected that about 15 lakh pilgrims would gather on the occasion, but, in fact, about 25 lakh pilgrims had collected at Hardwar on the occasion of "Somwati Amavasya". In the past, pilgrims were using two bridges at the Harki Pauri, but on the two bridges was not in use as it had been damaged due to rains in the last year. The stampede occurred when a large number of pilgrims tried to push their way through one bridge at about 6.30 in the morning.

On receipt of the report of the incident, Shri D.K. Arya, Adviser to the Governor, DG (Police) and State DG of Health Services immediately rushed to the spot. The State Government had also decided to have a judicial inquiry in the matter. In the meanwhile, the State Government had announced an *ex gratia* payment of Rs. 1 lakh to the dependant of each person killed in the incident and Rs. 25,000 to those injured. The injured are being treated at Government Hospital. Further, a senior Sub-Inspector of Police and one Naib Tehsildar, who were on duty near the bridge have been suspended.

As is evident from the reports of the two State Governments, the *prima facie* reasons for stampede

seem to be inadequate arrangements for crowd control on the occasion of such an important festival. The report of the Government of Uttar Pradesh, for example, states that there were only one Sub-Inspector and one Naib Tehsildar on duty at the bridge. As mentioned by some Members and Home Minister Yesterday, there have been mismanagement and lack of proper precautions on the part of the authorities. The detailed reasons for the tragedy will, no doubt be available as soon as the inquiry reports come in. But we hope that the other State Governments would, in the light of these incidents, issue appropriate directions to their field officers to prevent recurrence of such incidents.

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA (Andaman and Nicobar Islands) : Simply suspending of one Naib Tehsildar would not do (Interruptions)

MR CHAIRMAN : I am on my legs. Please sit down

(Interruptions)

MR CHAIRMAN : I am on my legs. You please resume your seats

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI NAVINCHANDRA MEHTA (Mumbai South) : He has told about Uttar Pradesh only and not about Madhya Pradesh (Interruptions)*

[English]

MR CHAIRMAN : Nothing is going on record

(Interruptions)*

MR CHAIRMAN : There is no rule, which allows you to seek clarifications. We must go by the rules

(Interruptions)

MR CHAIRMAN : You are a senior Member. There is no rule which allows you seeking clarifications in this House

(Interruptions)

MR CHAIRMAN : Nothing will go on record except what I said

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT (Shajapur) : I am on a point of order. My point of order is that (Interruptions) please allow me

[English]

MR CHAIRMAN : There is no point of order

16.11 hrs.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

Flood Situation and Natural Calamities in Different Parts of the Country

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now we go to the other item of the Business of this House. That item is regarding flood situation and natural calamities in different parts of the country and it should be moved by Prof. Prem Singh Chandumajra.

PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA (Patiala) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, under Rule 193, I want to draw the attention of the Government on an important matter which belongs to the whole country

[Translation]

Mr. Chairman, Sir, if you go through the facts showing the damage done by the floods, you will come to know that every year, floods not only destroy crops worth crores of rupees, but also damage houses and above of all thousands of cattle and hundreds of people die due to it. For example, in 1995, more than 600 people died, more than 2.2 lakh houses damaged and 1.66 lakh cattle died all over the country. In 1988 the floods caused more damage than this, specially in Punjab where Patiala city was fully inundated and as a result property worth millions of rupees was damaged due to it. The same situation was in Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Firozpur cities of Punjab. Likewise in Haryana, (English) last year, more than 50,000 inhabitants were compelled to come into terms

[Translation]

I am of the opinion that the Government is not serious enough to check damage on this account. This problem was not taken seriously and the measures taken in this regard were all temporary one. A certain amount was made available for flood relief in anticipation of flood and it was taken for granted that the flood will come and this much amount will be made available for this purpose, but that too was not properly allocated. The assistance as well as funds should be provided. The Central Government provided Rs. 800 crore in 1994-95 and Rs. 1130 crore in 1995-96 for this purpose. This amount is being enhanced every year but the same is being misused. The Government did not pay any heed to it. In 1988, the Government had issued Rs. 100 crore for flood relief out of which Rs. 32 crore were spent as administrative expenses. What relief did people get if Rs. 32 crore were spent on jeeps, aerial survey, diesel and payment of TA, DA? The patwaris and tehsildars also take their shares from it but the affected people get nothing out of this relief amount.