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Title: Regarding threat to the people of Ludhiana due to dumping of Arms and Ammunition in Ludhiana, Punjab.

SHRI SHARANJIT SINGH DHILLON (LUDHIANA) : I thank you, Sir, for giving me the opportunity to raise this important issue in the House. I want to draw the attention of the Central Government towards the Baddowal ammunition depot located in my constituency. Baddowal ammunition depot was established at a distance of 12 KMs from Ludhiana. However, as the population of the city increased and the city expanded, Baddowal ammunition depot became a part of Ludhiana and today, it is located in the heart of the city. As such, now, the population living around this ammunition depot faces constant danger from it.

I would like to provide an instance. At Khudru in Anantnag in Kashmir, a devastating fire suddenly broke out on August 11, at the military ammunition depot. At least 18 people died in the blaze and explosions there and twenty to twenty five people were badly injured. Similarly, there was a huge loss to life and property when a fire broke out at the Bharatpur ammunition depot.

Sir, highly explosive bombs and other incendiary arms and ammunitions have been stored at Baddowal ammunition depot. The lives and properties of forty lakh people of Ludhiana living around this ammunition depot are in grave danger. If a fire breaks out here, there will be large-scale death and devastation.

Sir, time and again, the people of Ludhiana have demanded that the Baddowal ammunition depot should be shifted and relocated somewhere else. I would also like to inform you, sir, that the rate of land around this depot is a whopping Rs.2 crore per acre whereas the rate of land anywhere else needed to relocate this ammunition depot will be only Rs.10 lakhs per acre. So, the Government and the Defence Ministry are suffering a financial loss at present. Moreover, Ludhiana city is a metropolis and it cannot be shifted anywhere else.

*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Punjabi.

Hence, I urge upon the Government to accede to the genuine demand of the people of Ludhiana and shift the Baddowal ammunition depot somewhere else at the earliest so that the lives of the 40 lakh people of Ludhiana are saved. Thank you.