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Title: The Minister of Home Affairs made a statement regarding bomb blasts at Lucknow, Varanasi and Faizabad in Uttar Pradesh.

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am directed to make a statement on what has happened in Uttar Pradesh. What I am giving to this august House is the preliminary report. We are in the process of collecting the information. Today serial blasts took place in Uttar Pradesh at Lucknow, Varanasi and Faizabad. All blasts took place in court premises. The details are as under:

Lucknow: A low intensity blast took place at 1305 hours near a cycle stand in court complex, Lucknow. No casualty is reported.

Varanasi: Three high intensity blasts took place between 1318 hours and 1320 hours in court premises, Varanasi, 10 persons are injured and 1 person is reported to have died.

Faizabad: Two high intensity blasts took place in Faizabad court premises at about 1325 hours, 2 persons died and 15 are injured.

All these six blasts took place inside or adjacent to court premises and particularly in all the three places near the cycle stands situated in court premises.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI (GANDHINAGAR): How many persons have died in Faizabad?

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Two persons have died in Faizabad. The total number of persons died, according to our information, is three. The affected areas have been cordoned off and the police, bomb disposal and detection squads, under the supervision of senior police officers, are conducting thorough searches. So far, no

information has been received regarding the type of explosives used, mechanism adopted and involvement of any group or organisation. According to the information from the police authorities, a high alert has been issued. If we get further information, we will share it with the House.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am grateful to the hon. Minister of Home Affairs for having given us this preliminary information about these blasts. I am sure the House would have an occasion to have a full statement on Monday as to what has happened because this practice of serial blasts started way back in 1993 when we had the first terrorist attack on Mumbai and it was then that we found that so many people had been killed in just a couple of hours or three hours where bombs were exploded spread over a long area. Since then, I have always held that it is difficult in a country of our size, and with terrorist outfits spread all over the country, to prevent even a single case happening. But where there are serial blasts, *prima facie*, it is a case of intelligence failure because for that they have to prepare over a period of time. It is not that a group of three or four people go and see a crowd at a bus station, throw a bomb and get away.

In the last few years, this has become a more recurring trend of serial blasts. It started with say three blasts in Delhi, then the worst case was last year when in Mumbai at a particular time, within a period of five to ten minutes, in seven different passenger trains, there were blasts. To the best of my knowledge, till now, we have not been able to apprehend the culprits in that very serious case where the whole operation was executed with a kind of a military precision. After that also, I have noticed, say, in Hyderabad – I myself went there – I found that simultaneously there were blasts, one at a stadium and another at Gokul Chat. So, this practice of serial blasts has become a recurring feature.

On Monday, if the hon. Minister apprises the House of all the cases that have happened in the past two years, including the attack on Bangalore, including the attack in Mumbai, including the attack on Hyderabad, including, of course, that may be slightly earlier, the attack on Ayodhya and attack on Varanasi in which Bangladeshis were supposed to be involved and give us details about who have been apprehended till now, what is the status of the cases that are being instituted against them so that it should go out to the world that the Government is very particular about handling this problem of terrorism and no one will be allowed to get away. This is my request to the hon. Home Minister and also in the meanwhile, further details, which can be collected about Lucknow, Varanasi and Faizabad, should be given.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I have allowed the Leader of Opposition because it involves the question of terrorism. In the normal course, it is not permissible. But anyhow, the hon. Minister may give a statement in addition.

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (SOUTH DELHI): Sir, today, newspapers and TV channels में कहा गया है कि आतंकवादियों द्वारा तिहाड़ जेल को तोड़कर, वहां से आतंकवादियों को छुड़ाने के बारे में, हमारी इंटेलिजेंस एजेन्सीज ने होम-मिनिस्टर को कॉन्शन किया है। यह भी कहा गया है कि तीन बम गले में डालकर राहुल जी को फिडनैप करने की बात भी हो रही थी। ऐसी बहुत सी घटनाएं आ रही हैं। हाउस के सामने इस बारे में कोई स्टेटमेंट नहीं आया है, उस बारे में भी बता देते तो अच्छा रहता।

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Sir, I will limit myself to the statement made by Shri Advani and on all other things, well if there is an occasion, we will give an explanation.

I am of the same view that serial blasts are taking place. In Delhi, serial blasts took place, in Varanasi, serial blasts took place, in Mumbai, serial blasts took place and generally three blasts have been taking place, and not only that, we have recovered the bombs also which were not exploded and which could have exploded.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI : There is one difference between those serial blasts and the one of today because in that case, it is either Delhi or Hyderabad or Mumbai. In this case it is spread over the State of Uttar Pradesh so that the operation has been more intense and therefore, there should have been greater possibility of the intelligence being able to identify either the people in Varanasi or the people in Lucknow or the people in Faizabad.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: I do agree that this is not a blast taking place in a city – three blasts – but in Varanasi many blasts have taken place in the city. In Faizabad and Lucknow also blasts have taken place. That means, they have widened the area of activity. And it is necessary for us to look into these things. I would be very happy to give information with regard to the status of the cases which have been filed. We do have the information; people have been arrested and cases are going on. But, it will be useful to discuss this matter any time which is given by the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN : It may be discussed next week.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : We would be happy to share the information....(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister may collect all the information and place it before the House. If the House decides, we will have a discussion on this issue also.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, it is 'Zero Hour'. Be brief and do not make a lengthy speech.

Now Shri Shailendra Kumar to speak.