

steps are already taken, which steps Government have already initiated.

MR. SPEAKER : Medical steps.

SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL : I could not understand this. I asked specifically whether oxygen will be available and Government will create centres or not.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : Sir, earlier oxygen cylinders were in shortage and so they were transported from Delhi by air and from other places also. They were brought from Kanpur—from the Indian Oxygen Factory also. We asked them to transport it immediately.

[*Translation*]

• SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL : Mr. Speaker, Sir in reply to part (c) of the question, it has been stated that the Government has seen such reports in the Press and they did not know anything about it earlier. I would like to know the remedy suggested by Indian Council of Medical Research and the action taken by government in this regard. I would also like to know as to who suggested Sodium Thiosulphate and now far it was used in the treatment and whether it has been banned or not; and, if not, the reasons therefor.

[*English*]

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : Sir, for Sodium Thiosulphate we have sought help from W.H.O. also and from all available resources with doctors and scientists to help in this calamity. So, one German Toxicologist Dr. Daunderer, suggested that Sodium Thiosulphate can be useful and as the hon. Member and the entire House knows the German experts have some experience in this treatment. So he suggested Sodium Thiosulphate and it has helped to a certain extent because when given, it has demonstrated that administration of Sodium Thiosulphate increased the excretion of Thiocyanide in the urine. So, it has helped. I have said in my

reply also that whatever appeared in the press is not correct. I have specifically denied it.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : Sir, I would like to know whether the Minister is aware that there was strong suspicion expressed that cyanide poisoning probably was found in the victims. There was an Army person admitted in the AIIMS. It is learnt that the POST MORTEM report had revealed cyanide poisoning while the Union Carbide denied stating that it was not so. I would like to know from the Minister whether he is aware of that POST MORTEM report; if so, whether it is cyanide poisoning and if not, whether he would go into this question and see that this does not effect adversely.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : Sir I do not know which POST MORTEM report the hon. lady Member is referring to.

MR. SPEAKER : You get the information from the Member and follow it up.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : But as I have already said, a double blind study demonstrated that Sodium Thiosulphate administration increased the excretion of in the urine. So Sir, the POSTMORTEM report does show the cyanide poisoning.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : Sir I hope regarding your proposal to take up the matter, it would be followed up by the Minister.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : Sir will you kindly ask the Minister to give reply to Question No. 37 also, which is a similar one?

MR. SPEAKER : No, we did not take that up now.

Spread of Meningitis Disease

28. PROF. P. J. KURIEN :
SHRI CHITTA MAHATA :

Will the Minister of HEALTH

AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of lives lost due to the recent spread of meningitis disease in Delhi ;

(b) whether it is a fact that the disease has spread to the neighbouring states also ;

(c) what measures are being taken by Government to check the disease and to stop its spreading ; and

(d) whether experts opinion has also been sought and if so, the suggestions made by experts ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA) : (a) 225 deaths due to Meningococcal meningitis in Delhi have been reported since beginning January to 10th March' 1985.

(b) While all the states have been alerted' the reports received so far indicate only sporadic occurrences in certain parts of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

(c) The following measures have been undertaken to check the spread of the disease :

(i) Constant surveillance is being maintained specially in the affected and congested localities.

(ii) Early diagnosis and treatment, even on the basis of presumptive clinical diagnosis is being undertaken.

(iii) Arrangements for adequate supply of drugs required to combat the disease have been made. All the hospitals and dispensaries have stocked sufficient quantities of the required antibiotics and supportive drugs.

(iv) In order to create a general

awareness amongst the public and to impress upon them the need for early diagnosis and treatment the services of AIR and Doordarshan, and also of the press have been utilised.

(v) The Indian Medical Association have initiated actions to issue instructions to their members regarding proper management of cases.

(vi) The WHO, at our behest has airlifted Sera for proper typing of the causative organisms.

(vii) The Indian Council of Medical Research has initiated studies on carriers and their management in order to provide information on the epidemiology of the disease for better control.

(viii) It has been decided to vaccinate the identified high-risk groups for which arrangements have been made.

(d) The experts are being consulted regularly. They have suggested close monitoring, intensification of the preventive and health education measures and a limited vaccination of the identified high-risk groups. Necessary action is being taken accordingly).

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER : As the reply is so long it could have been given in the form of a statement.

[*English*]

PROF. P. J. KURIEN : Sir, the Minister had said that 225 deaths have taken place due to the attack of meningitis. He has also admitted that this disease has spread to Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan also. But Sir, the information is not complete. Today in the newspaper it has been reported that in Punjab also, this disease has

spread. In Chandigarh 5 deaths have been reported. I have read it in today's newspaper. Is it not a fact that percentage of deaths due to this attack of Meningitis is much more this year than that of last year? Is it also not a fact that the higher percentage of deaths this year is due to the fact that vital drugs for curing this disease were not available in many of the hospitals?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : No, Sir. The hon. Member is not correct in saying that the number of deaths have increased this year. I have got the figures with me in respect of 3 hospitals which show that though the number of cases have increased, the number of deaths have come down. During the period, November, 1982 to January, 1983, the number of cases were 193 but the number of deaths were 81, in November, 1983 to January, 1984, the number of cases increased from 193 to 203 but the number of deaths decreased from 81 to 77 and again, in November, 1984 to January, 1985, the number of cases increased from 203 in the previous year to 328 but the number of deaths decreased from 77 in the previous year to 75. So, the figure of deaths has gone down and it has not increased.

PROF. P. J. KURIEN : The hon. Minister himself admitted in the written answer that the figure of deaths this year is 225. He is now saying that the figure of deaths is only 75.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : If the hon. Member heard me properly, I have given the figures for a quarter, from November, 1984 to January, 1985.

PROF. P. J. KURIEN : According to the hon. Minister himself, this year, from November to March, 1985, the total number of deaths is 225. My contention is, according to his own figures, the percentage of deaths this year is higher than that of last year. That is my point.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : The hon. Member is confused. I have given the figure of 225 for the period from 1st January to 10th March, 1985 whereas the figures which I referred to here are for the period from November, 1984 to January, 1985. This is beyond January, not before January.

PROF. P. J. KURIEN : My question was about this period only. From 1st January to March, 1985, the total number of deaths is 225, not 75. So there is definitely an increase in the percentage of deaths. If he has not got the figures, let him examine it. Let me come to my second supplementary.

AN HON. MEMBER : The first supplementary has not been replied to.

PROF. P. J. KURIEN : He can answer both together. Sir, if you can assure me that you will allow me second supplementary, let him answer first supplementary.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : I said repeatedly that there is a confusion in the mind of the hon. Member. It is about the period for which I have given the figures. Another thing is that the figure, which I have given here, that is, 225, is in respect of 7 hospitals whereas the figures which I am quoting are in respect of 3 hospitals.

AN HON. MEMBER : He is creating more confusion.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : THE Health Minister's health is not proper.

MR. SPEAKER : Can you vouchsafe for that.

PROF. P. J. KURIEN : There is a famous dictum that prevention is better than cure. Is it not a fact that we are not having sufficient preventive drugs?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Don't say that. Otherwise, there will be preventive detention.

SHRI SUDINI JAIPAL REDDY :
The prevention of a question is better than the cure of an answer.

PROP. P. J. KURIEN : Is it not that we are not having sufficient preventive measures? Is it not a fact that so far we have not started vaccination for immunising the people at least in the vulnerable areas?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA :
We have not reached that stage where we have to vaccinate all the people. In case of an epidemic or a disease in a cluster, we can surround the area and vaccinate the surrounding population. But that is not the case here. These are sporadic cases occurring in different parts of the city and in different places. So, it does not invite vaccination EN MASSE.

SHRI CHITTARANJAN MAHATA :
I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether this disease is identified as viral or bacterial and which part of the country is the most affected by it?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : It is bacterial.

SHRI CHITTARANJAN MAHATA :
What bacteria?

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : Congress bacterial!

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA :
Meningo Coccal is the bacteria.

SHRI C. P. THAKUR : This disease occurs all over India throughout the year in a sporadic form. Sometimes it erupts in an epidemic form and it is bacterial infection caused by Meningo Coccal. It is not virus. Just now, the hon. Minister has said that it is caused by Mening Coccal. In that case, all the drugs to treat that disease are available in the country, like the Sulpha diazine, Chloromphenicol, Penicillin and Gertamycine. It is sensitive to these drugs. The patient dies only if the infection is very serious or if the

bacteria are resistant to drugs which is rare.

MR. SPEAKER : I have got lot of doctors. Why don't we make a committee of them?

SHRI C. P. THAKUR : The patient dies only if the drugs are not administered at an early stage. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the patient died because of the severity of the infection or because Meningo Coccal were found resistant to drugs. Is there any report on that?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA :
I have the information with me about the bacteria. This bacteria is not A & C type.

SHRI C. P. THAKUR : I want to know whether this disease is resistant to drugs or not.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA :
If immediate treatment is administered to the patient, then it is cured. If the treatment is delayed, it becomes fatal. So far, no drug resistance is noticed in any of the cases treated.

Then, about the sufficiency of preventive drugs, we have sufficient preventive drugs, the sulphadiazine.

Setting up Thermal Power Plant at Kharsia

*29. **KUMARI PUSHPA DEVI :**
Will the Minister of IRRIGATION AND POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have a proposal for the establishment of a Thermal Power Plant at Kharsia in Madhya Pradesh; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to implement the above Proposal?

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (SHRI B. SANKARANAND) : (a) The Mahya Pradesh State Electricity Board has sent to the Cen-