

the Children's Film Festival at Trivandrum. The Kerala Government and other organisations in Kerala have requested the hon. Minister to make available the Second Channel when it becomes operational for TV telecast in Kerala.

MR. SPEAKER: Does it come out of this question?

PROF. KV. THOMAS: No, Sir. The Varadan Committee had recommended that when the Second Channel becomes operational for the regional telecast, preference should be given to States which are far off.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Sir, a representation was made about the Second Channel. But, as the hon. Members of the House know that the conception of Second Channel was to cover only the metropolitan cities.

So far as Trivandrum is concerned, Local channel can be considered and through the Regional Channel, 70 per cent of Kerala has already been covered. It is not through Satellite but through Micro-Wave System.

Therefore, the question of Second Channel to Kerala is already within the policy laid down by the Government of India. Of course, if there is a local channel available, we shall certainly examine that.

Deaths in Delhi After Consuming 'Sura'

*43. **SHRI TARACHAND KHAN-DELWAL:**
SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of persons died and many were taken seriously ill in Delhi recently after consuming 'Sura' bottled by Karpoor Asav Pharmacy, Karnal;

(b) if so, the number thereof;

(c) whether the Government propose to give compensation to the next of the kin of the deceased and whether any action has been taken against the manufacturers of 'Sura';

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether any demand has been made for a judicial inquiry into the incident and if so, the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(f) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to avoid recurrence of such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI M.M. JACOB): (a) to (f). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

Reports were received that several persons have been admitted to a hospital in Delhi for treatment for unknown poison. Inquiries revealed that all of them had consumed an Ayurvedic medicine called "Karpoor Asav". Inquiries by Delhi Police showed that this drug was manufactured by a firm called Karnal Pharmacy which had its unit at Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh. The factory was sealed by Delhi Police on 7.11.91 with the assistance of the local Police and all its stocks seized. Immediately the Delhi Police impounded all bottles of 'Sura' in the market.

2. Samples of the suprious drug were analysed and found to contain methyl alcohol. Three of the proprietors of the firm have been arrested alongwith the main distributors and one of the proprietors is absconding. A case under sections 284/304 IPC has been registered against the manufacturers. 93 persons have been arrested so far in the extensive raids carried out in Delhi. 337 criminal cases have been registered.

13 shops of Ayurvedic medicine have been sealed.

3. So far 199 persons have died and 63 are presently admitted in hospitals. 77 persons were discharged after treatment and 6 who were admitted in the hospital had left on their own against medical advice.

4. Inquiries revealed that the delinquent unit, M/s. Karnal Pharmacy, had earlier been given a manufacturing licence by the Directorate of Ayurvedic and Unani Medicines of the Government of Uttar Pradesh. Further inquiries showed that the licence of the unit was not renewed after 31.12. 1988.

5. An ex-gratia assistance of Rs. 10,000/- to the next-of-kin of each deceased and Rs. 5,000/- to each person rendered blind by the consumption of this spurious drug has been sanctioned by the Delhi Administration.

6. The Delhi Administration has set up a one-Man Commission of Inquiry under the Commission of Inquiry Act, 1952, to inquire into various aspects of the incident.

7. The Union Ministry of Health has issued instructions on 14.11.1991 to all state Drugs Controllers to ensure that manufacture of Ayurvedic, Siddha and Unani drug conform to the laid down specifications and the Drug Inspectors must carry out indepth inspection of all manufacturing firms. Instructions have also been issued to the Delhi Administration and to the Government of Uttar Pradesh that manufacturers/stockists and vendors of spurious drugs manufactured and sold under the label of Ayurvedic drugs should be prosecuted vigorously; Instructions have also been issued to all State Governments that rectified spirit may not be allowed to be used as a substitute for 'Prasanna', which is one of the ingredients of 'Karpour Asav'.

8. The Government is making every endeavour to vigorously pursue the investigation of the cases registered against the persons responsible for the manufacture and sale of the spurious drug. Delhi Administration has been alerted to strictly comply

with the Instructions issued by the Health Ministry. The Delhi Administration has also get up a Committee to follow-up the raids conducted by the Delhi Police and the Delhi Excise Department and the Drug Controller of Delhi.

[*Translation*]

SHRI TARACHAND KHANDELWAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the reply given by the hon. Minister is not satisfactory and has not given full facts. In his reply he has said that 199 persons have lost their lives in the liquor tragedy but according to the authentic report available with us the liquor tragedy has claimed 243 lives and 56 persons have become blind. 30 persons left the hospital without permission of the hospital authorities but you have told that the figure is only seven. However, I welcome the One-Man Commission of Inquiry set up by the Government. I regret to say that the hon. Minister has not mentioned the time by which the aforesaid commission would submit its report. The newspapers reported that the commission has to submit its report in two months. But we are yet to hear from hon. Minister. I want to point out that if the Commission takes two months for publishing to report then the tragic aspect of this gruesome tragedy will subside. This is what I wish to say.

MR. SPEAKER: You please ask questions relevant to the information that is given to you.

SHRI TARACHAND KHANDELWAL: An ex-gratia assistance of Rs. 10,000/- to the next of kin of each deceased has been announced. Does the Government think that human life is worth 10,000/- only. Is this amount adequate? Those who became blind for their whole live by this spurious liquor are to be given Rs. 5,000/-. This ex-gratia payment announced is inadequate. As such does the hon. Minister propose to enhance this amount?

[*English*]

SHRI M.M. JACOB: Sir, the hon.

Member has made two or three points. According to the Reports available with us, the number of people who died is 1991. It is also a fact that a few people are even now in the hospital. That is also given in my statement. Some people really went out of the hospital even without informing the hospital authorities.

Some of them did not want to reveal their identity that they had taken illicit poisonous liquor. So, I don't think that the figure mentioned by the hon. Member is also correct. Anyway, I will make an attempt to find out if there are any other people who were affected by this tragedy other than what I have already stated in my statement.

Another point which the hon. Member has mentioned is about the compensation. Rs. 10,000 is given to the next of kin of each deceased and Rs. 5000 to each person who were rendered blind by the consumption of liquor and also some money to those who had been injured. Some other facilities are also given.

The hon. Member has correctly said that the time given for the inquiry commission is two months. This thing has happened in a factory located in the U.P. State. Probably, speedy efforts can be made. We will see that the commission completes their work speedily. But I cannot promise at this stage.

[*Translation*]

SHRI TARA CHAND KHANDELWAL: I would like to ask the hon. Minister who is holding an inquiry into the Sura incident in Uttar Pradesh, whether he knows the number of deaths caused by it there. Actually, this matter is more related to Delhi than Uttar Pradesh because this incident especially has taken place in Delhi.

[*English*]

SHRI M.M. JACOB: We have communicated to the U.P. Government to give us particulars not only this but only several

points connected with this and we have not got a specific reply about this. Even this morning our office contacted the Special Home Secretary but he was not there. We are awaiting their report.

SHRI K.H. MUNIYYPAPPA: Has the Government taken serious steps regarding this? What action has been taken against those who manufactured sura; if not, whether the Government proposes to take the drastic steps against them; if not the Government has to give an assurance to the House that they would take drastic steps against them?

SHRI M.M. JACOB: The government has already sealed 13 Ayurvedic shops and also arrested 93 people who were supposed to be connected with this; and also there are four people who are concerned to be in the manufacturer of this Sura; out of them three people have been arrested and one is absconding.

[*Translation*]

SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to know whether the Act in force under which these arrests have been made provides imprisonment maximum for six months and whether the Government, through an ordinance or by bringing forward very soon an amendment Bill in this House, will make provision for severe punishment including death sentence instead of imprisonment for 6 months to these death merchants. Secondly, the postmortem examination of several dead bodies was deliberately not carried out so that the gravity of the matter is not highlighted in the public. However it is in the Government record that these deaths took place as result of this Sura-incidents. Even then compensation is being paid only in case of victims whose postmortem was conducted. Why compensation is not being paid to all when death was caused by this Sura in all cases? I would like to know whether compensation would be paid in all cases. Each death irrespective of the fact that post-mortem was not conducted in

certain cases was caused due to the Sura incident.

[*English*]

SHRI M.M. JACOB: Actually, cases are charged under Sections 284, 304 and 308. Under section 308, it is not imprisonment for two months; it is imprisonment for seven years of fine or both.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: He wants to inform the Minister; he wants to educate the Minister.

SHRI M.M. JACOB: Actually, this is a matter purely for the Health Ministry and the directions are given from the Health Ministry. Because it happened in Delhi and because it is connected with the death of many people the Home ministry took the responsibility. The Commission of Inquiry has to ascertain the number of persons who died or were disabled. All those details are also given. The Health Ministry, I am told, has sent a circular to all the concerned on 14.11.1991 prohibiting all such sales.

One thing the hon. Members must understand. The whole incident happened when a Ghaziabad-based unit in Uttar Pradesh State manufactured this liquor and from information available with us it appears that the licence of the unit was renewed after 31-12-88. And still they were given a licence for 4000 litres of potable alcohol. That was given by the excise department. Unfortunately, I cannot control the factory in the U.P. State. It is a matter for the State Government. I am waiting for a reply from the U.P. government.

[*Translation*]

SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA: This matter does not concern U.P. only but Delhi also where more than 200 people have died.

SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA: Prior to this, their party was in power for 4 years, and licence to manufacture Sura is also

given by the Government machinery. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SURYA NARAYAN YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is any alternative to Sura? If so, will the Government enact a stringent law so as to ban the sale of Sura and Alcohol which cause death to so many people or to cancel their licences?

MR SPEAKER: This has already been asked by Shri Khurana.

(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

SHRI M.M. JACOB: Any other step other than what is already announced by the Home Ministry can be taken only after the inquiry report is received.

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. B. CHAVAN): May I clarify this? Actually, the licence is not given for the manufacture of Sura. It is methyl alcohol which has been added to it. No licence is given. This is all illegal.

The question of issuing a licence does not arise.

[*Translation*]

SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA: What I wanted to say is that there is a provision of only 6 months imprisonment for the people who indulge in adulteration. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: No, it is not so. The provisions of I.P..C are also applied in such cases. I will tell you. Please sit down.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI B.L. SHARMA PREM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as many as 233 people have died in my constituency alone. I would like to know whether any action has so far been taken against any Police or Administrative Officer in this regard?

[*English*]

SHRI M.M. JACOB: I do not think that there is any role played by police officers in this.

[*Translation*]

SHRI B.L. SHARMA PREM: The Beat Constable posted in the area is supposed to know the activities going on in his area. So, please state whether any action has been taken against any Police Officer or any other officer of the area? (*interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Let us not shift the responsibility from the real culprits.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: This is not correct. Two hundred people have died. Let us fix the responsibility on the real culprits.

MR. SPEAKER: Let us not do like that. 200 people have died. Let us fix the responsibility on the proper person.

SHRI M.M. JACOB: The only thing that has been done is that the SHO of the area has been suspended.

SHRI CHANDRAJIT YADAV: You have rightly made an observation that this is a very serious after in which more than 200 persons have died. The answer shows that this firm did not renew its manufacturing licence after 1988. It is the Drug Controller of Uttar Pradesh and Drug Inspectors in Uttar Pradesh whose main responsibility is to see that the proper thing for which the licence has been given, is manufactured. They have totally failed in their duty. Has the Central Government taken up this matter with the Uttar Pradesh Government that those officers responsible i.e. Drug Directorate and Drug Inspectors, are also punished because they are equally guilty for the killing of these people? Has any action been taken in this regard?

SHRI S.B. CHAVAN: The question is very valid. It is true that it is the Controller of Drugs in Uttar Pradesh who is mainly responsible and the Drug Inspectors who should have gone there and seen that according to the terms of the licence things are being manufactured. We have been trying our level best to get the information from the UP Government. But somehow or the other we have not succeeded so far... (*Interruptions*) After 1988 the licence was not renewed. In spite of that, potable alcohol was also being issued to this company. The entire thing is going to be enquired into by the Commission. After the Commission gives its findings, necessary action will be taken.

SHRI SHARAD DIGHE: A Commission of Inquiry has been appointed. Over the years a number of establishments in North India have been manufacturing this sort of a medicine and people die. So this is not an isolated incident.

In September last year also 11 persons in Rishikesh died after consuming a poison called Sanjivni Sura. So the Delhi Police was also aware of the distribution of such medicines in Delhi. Therefore, my question is whether any departmental enquiry is going to be held as to why no prevention should be adopted by the Delhi Police also as far as the distribution of the ayurvedic medicines are concerned.

SHRI M.M. JACOB: It is primarily the duty of the Drug Inspectors and Drug Controllers to implement these conditions. It is upto them to see to it.

Attrocities on SCs/STs

- * 44. SHRI SHRAVAN KUMAR PATEL:
SHRI V.S. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN:

Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the measures discussed in the two day Chief Minister' conference held last