

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : You can raise it after Question Hour please. Please allow me to run the House.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Sharad Pawar, we can discuss it immediately after Question Hour.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR : I agree...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Now I am calling the Questions. Please take your seats.

[Translation]

SHRI AJIT JOGI (Raigrah) : Ruling Party is not allowing the House to function....(Interruptions)

SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH (Vaishali) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have given a notice...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : No, I am calling the Questions. Please take your seats.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please take your seats. Question No. 1, Shri Tathagata Satpathy.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : After the Question Hour only. Question No. 1.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Question No. 1.

AN HON. MEMBER : Sir he is sitting at the back row.

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY (Dhenkanal) : Sir, I am away from your view. You have not been kind enough to look at me, after all. I am sitting here behind the pillar. I am totally invisible from public view and from your view also...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Question No. 1.

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY : It is extremely unfortunate that you are not able to spot me. However, with all sadness, I stand here...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Question No. 1, Shri Tathagata Satpathy.

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY : Sir, I have been standing here. I have been saying I am present here. It is for the hon. Minister to answer the Question.

11.04 hrs.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Atrocities on Minorities

*1. SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY :
DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the incidents of atrocities against minorities particularly Christian Community/ Churches/Schools have increased in several parts of the country particularly in Orissa, Gujarat and Maharashtra during the last six months;

(b) if so, the details of loss of lives and properties and attacks which took place, State-wise, crime-wise, and community-wise;

(c) whether the Government have asked for reports from States in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(e) whether the Government have registered any case in this regard;

(f) if so, the number of persons found guilty and the compensation paid to each victimised families, State-wise;

(g) the findings of the central team which visited the affected States;

(h) whether the Government also propose to set up a mechanism to monitor and check such attacks on minorities;

(i) if so, the details thereof; and

(j) the steps taken to safeguard the interest and safety of the minorities?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI) : (a) to (j) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (j) A statement indicating the number of incidents of attacks on Christians during the two halves of the year 1998, State-wise is enclosed. Details of individual incidents are not maintained at the Central level.

2. The Guidelines to Promote Communal Harmony stipulate that as soon as a communal incident occurs, the State should send a report immediately to the Ministry of Home Affairs. Information in regard to

major incidents against Christians that occurred recently was also sought from the concerned State Governments. Further, a Central Team was deputed to Gujarat to interact with senior State Government functionaries in connection with the situation arising out of reported attacks on Christians and their institutions in the State and to ascertain the steps taken by the State authorities to control the situation. The Central Team recommended several confidence building measures to defuse the situation and to ensure communal harmony. Based on the report of the Central Team, appropriate instructions have been issued.

3. Though "Public Order" and "Police" are State subjects as per the Constitution of India and maintenance of law and order and prevention of crime is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments, the Central Government has been taking several measures to keep the communal situation under control and to provide protection to the minorities. Some of these measures are mentioned below :

- (i) Sharing intelligence with the State Governments.
- (ii) Sending advisories to the State Governments from time to time.
- (iii) Assisting the State Governments by providing the Central Para-Military Forces, etc. (The Central Government has also constituted a Special Force, viz., Rapid Action Force, for controlling communal riots and tensions.)

(iv) Assisting the State Governments in upgrading their policing infrastructure.

4. After the recent incidents involving minorities, the Chief Secretaries of the concerned States have been advised to issue suitable instructions to the district law and order enforcing authorities to respond immediately to the complaints relating to harassment of minorities and initiate prompt and effective action to identify and punish guilty persons.

5. The Central Government has appointed a Commission of Inquiry consisting of Mr. Justice D.P. Wadhwa, a sitting Judge of the Supreme Court of India, under the provisions of the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952, to make an inquiry with regard to the killing of Mr. Graham Stewart Staines, an Australian national and his two sons, on the night of 22nd/23rd January, 1999, in villae Manoharpur, Keonjhar District, Orissa.

6. The National Commission for Minorities already exists to monitor the working of the safeguards provided in the Constitution and in laws enacted by Parliament and the State Legislatures and make recommendations for the effective implementation of safeguards for the protection of the interests of minorities by the Central Government or the State Governments.

7. The Government is firmly of the view that acts of violence against any community, wherever and in whatever form they occur, must be dealt with sternly and exemplary punishment awarded to the perpetrators of such violence.

Annexure

Statement showing the number of incidents of attacks on Christians during the two halves of the year 1998(State-Wise)

States	No. of Incidents		No. of Persons Killed		No. of Persons Injured	
	1/98 to 6/98	7/98 to 12/98	1/98 to 6/98	7/98 to 12/98	1/98 to 6/98	7/98 to 12/98
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Andhra Pradesh	1	-	-	-	-	-
Arunachal Pradesh	1	-	-	-	-	-
Bihar	3	1	1	-	2	-
Dadar & Nagar Haveli	1	-	-	-	1	-
Delhi	-	1	-	-	-	-
Gujarat	5	43	-	-	4	19
Haryana	-	1	-	-	-	-
Kerala	2	4	-	-	-	-

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Karnataka	-	1	-	-	-	-
Madhya Pradesh	-	3	-	-	-	-
Maharashtra	6	3	-	-	-	-
Orissa	3	-	-	-	-	-
Punjab	1	-	-	-	-	-
Tamil Nadu	-	3	-	-	-	6
Uttar Pradesh	1	1	-	-	5	-
	24	61	1	-	12	25

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY : Sir, I would like to know from the Government whether they feel that there is the hand of any force from outside India, which is now interested to destabilise the present political set up in the country. I would also like to know whether some political party from within the country is supporting this force that is trying to foment trouble, especially, against minorities and that too against Christians, with a view to defame India, in the West and to create a feeling among all minority communities in India that there is something wrong with the present Government. I would also like to know whether the Government is aware that there are certain business houses also with links abroad, involved in such atrocities, and they are funding these movements.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI : Sir, the hon. Member has expressed certain apprehensions, certain fears and certain misgivings which have been voiced in large sections of the people also. So far as this Government is concerned, this Government has expressed anguish over these incidents. It has asked the concerned Governments to take stern and immediate action against all those who are found guilty of fomenting any communal trouble.

And not only that, when a major incident took place in Orissa in which an Australian national and his two minor sons were brutally killed, it went to the length of having a sitting judge of the Supreme Court appointed to have a judicial probe into the whole matter, so that all the ramifications of these incidents - though in this case it is one incident - can be brought to light. This is something that has not been done before, except in the case of a former Prime Minister. In fact, I may share with the House that the Chief Justice, when we approached him for this purpose, expressed some hesitation in sparing a sitting judge. But he appreciated the Government's concern and in view of the fact that this issue is of a nature in which all facts should be brought to light, he agreed kindly to this suggestion. I can again

assure the House that in these matters the Government would not be found wanting in seeing that whatever action is needed, is taken.

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY : Sir, an impression is being created that this Government is not sincere in dealing with these problems. Keeping that in view, I would like to know whether the Government has set any specific time limit for the Inquiry Commission that the hon. Minister has mentioned right now, within which the inquiry report should be given to the Government. My apprehensions are that because the State Government is of one political party and the Union Government is being run by a conglomerate of parties, in that situation, the impression being given is that the State Government is not interested to successfully implement or to see that this Inquiry Commission successfully disposes of the matter. So, is the Union Government aware of this? Are they specifically trying to go to the root of the problem and trying to solve it, or is it being dealt with very superficially?

SHRI L.K. ADVANI : Sir, there has been a change of Government in Orissa these days...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY : There is a change of Chief Minister, not a change of Government.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI : There is a change of Government, though it is not a change of party. I can only say that I have had occasion to talk to the new Chief Minister also and I urged upon him the need to see that the country gets to the root of it. This is not a partisan issue at all.

So far as the time limit is concerned ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR : But it suits their political needs to see that Christians are terrorised within Orissa...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI L.K. ADVANI : Sir, there is a specific time limit so far as the inquiry is concerned and that time limit is two months.

[Translation]

DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the attacks on minorities especially on Christians and Muslims which have been going on in the country for the last 7-8 months, show that everywhere RSS is involved in one way or the other...(Interruptions) Are you talking about Bihar? The person who has killed in Bihar...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You ask the questions.

DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD : Mr. Speaker, Sir, at all the places where attacks have taken place, Bajrang Dal, Vishwa Hindu Parishad and RSS are behind them. Their political wings have formed the government. The Home Minister who is responsible for supervising the law and order situation in the country, is sitting here. The government has constituted a commission to enquire into the assaults on minorities which have taken place for the last 5-6 months. Has the government any intention or scheme to assess the role of RSS, Vishwa Hindu Parishad and especially of Bajrang Dal in these attacks?

SHRI L.K. ADVANI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the most heinous of all these events have taken place in the Manoharpur village of Orissa and in a village of Jhabua district of Madhya Pradesh...(Interruptions) and as far as the question of government is concerned, it has issued instructions to the commission as well as to all the state-governments wherein stress has been laid that punishment should be given to both, the guilty individual as well as organisation after indentifying them. There should be no hesitation in doing so.

DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I did not get reply of my question. My second supplementary is that...

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Now, I have called Shri Sharad Pawar, Dr. Shakeel Ahmad, please take your seat.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : No second supplementary please. Please take your seat.

[Translation]

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it has been revealed through the statement of the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs, made in the House that 61 such incidents have taken place in the country

between July 1998 and December 1998 and out of those, 43 incidents have taken place in Gujrat alone. This way, maximum incidents have occurred in Gujrat. Looking into these circumstances, I would like to know from the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs as to what special steps or preventive measures have been taken to manage the crisis?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : No running commentary please. Madam, please take your seat.

[Translation]

SHRI L.K. ADVANI : Mr. Speaker, Sir a team from the centre was sent to Gujrat to assess the situation there. The team members have issued the instructions to all the officers after holding consultation with them. These instructions have been complied with and we have been maintaining a continuous contact with them.

SHRI .C.D. GAMIT : Mr. Speaker, Sir but we were not allowed to meet them...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : The Central team did not visit Ahua, the place where a series of incidents occurred...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : No, this is not good. Please take your seat.

[Translation]

SHRI L.K. ADVANI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Leader of the Opposition has asked the question about Gujrat. I am satisfied that the government of Gujrat has arrested several persons in this connection. The prosecution cases have been going on against them. Though some events of vandalism, and destruction have taken place and at some other places extensive damage has been done, the Government will never hesitate to take action against any crime committed or breach of law. Similar instructions have been given to state governments also.

[English]

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA : Sir, we are happy to hear that a commission has been appointed to probe into the incident which happened in Orissa, but the list shows that there are 15 States involved. Though in some States, one or two incidents have taken place. Incidents have mainly happened in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Bihar. Therefore, once and for all, I will request the Government that the terms of reference of the commission be such that it is not limited to only one State and one issue. This is a dangerous thing happening all over the country and our assessment is that these one or two incidents

are taking place not just because of communal passion, but because some people are misguiding the local organisations and they are moving with certain designs. Therefore, I would like to ask the Government whether they are going to include in the terms of reference such broad terms that the judge, who is a very notable judge of the Supreme Court, can go into deep causes and reasons for such incidents happening not only in Orissa but also in all other States.

MR. SPEAKER : The question relates to Orissa, Maharashtra and Gujarat.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA : But Sir, the list contains names of 15 States. Since the Commission has now been constituted, I would like to know from the hon. Home Minister whether the terms of reference can be widened, so that the root cause behind it could be found out within two months.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI : Sir, the hon. Member earlier stressed the need for expediting this matter. I may share with the hon. Member, Shri Panja, who has just put the question, that the Cabinet considered this matter as to what kind of Commission should be set up and whether it should be a wider one, which would then take a long long time, or confine it to one particular incident. When three Ministers of the Central Cabinet personally went to the place, they were totally baffled as to how this has happened and why this has happened. It is then that the kind of suspicion that the principal Member, who has put this question, expressed, came to my mind and it was felt that instead of widening the sphere of inquiry, we should make this a test case to find out whether there are any other extraneous factors which are behind it, apart from the tensions that exist in certain tribal areas because after all, the principal incidents have taken place in certain tribal areas for reasons which I need not go into now. But this point which has been just mentioned was taken into consideration and a considered decision was taken that let it be confined only to this one incident, so that we can come to conclusions soon.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : It was only during the last Session that the Home Minister assured this country and this House that every possible measure would be taken to protect the minorities. In spite of that, immediately after that, from the Christmas Day onwards, there was an organised attack on the places of worship of the Christians in the Dang District of Gujarat. The Central Team which was deputed to Gujarat, I am sorry to say, did not go to the Dang District. They just went to Ahmedabad and submitted a report, and the Home Minister gave a clean chit to the Bajrang Dal and Hindu Jagran Manch, which were spearheading these attacks. The three Central

Ministers who went to Orissa spent only one hour there and they expenrated the Bajrang Dal. They one said that they are not behind this incident.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : They think that it is an international conspiracy.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : They found out an international conspiracy. If the Bajrang Dal and Hindu Jagran Manch are not behind these attacks, then I would like to know from the Home Minister as to who are all behind these attacks or which are the forces behind these attacks.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI : I have already said that so far as Manoharpur is concerned it being a matter which is presently being probed by a sitting Judge of the Supreme Court, there is no question of exonerating anyone.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Basu Deb Acharia, you should not disturb the Minister like this.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Then how did you come to the conclusion that Bajrang Dal was not behind it?

SHRI L.K. ADVANI : The Government has not come to any conclusions.

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR : Then why have you given a statement like that?

SHRI L.K. ADVANI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the statement that is being attributed to me, I would not like to try to clarify it or explain it again or contradict it. Today, there is a Commission of Inquiry inquiring into the matter and, therefore, all that I can say is...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : You have not contradicted it.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI : All that I can say is that whosoever is involved in that episode, whether it is the Bajrang Dal or VHP or anyone else, no one would be spared and they would be punished...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI LALU PRASAD : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to tell the hon. Minister of Home Affairs that I have visited that area of Dang where institutions were burnt down. Cross too was burnt there. There, all the people are terrified....*(Interruptions)* To the hon. Home Minister. The people of Christian Community of that area...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH : We speak, "Bharat Mata ki Jai; do you say, Rabri Devi Ki jai"?

SHRI LALU PRASAD : Bharat Mata ki Jai, Krishan Bhagvan ki Jai, now you sit down...*(Interruptions)*
 Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister of Home Affairs as to whether it is true or not that the members of the Christian Community had given in writing to the administration of that area that their festival was falling on 25th and there was a strong possibility of them being attacked? Hon. Minister of Home Affairs has himself said that the Bajrang Dal has no hand in it. You are saying that you are going to conduct an enquiry by Shri Wadhwa, the sitting judge of the Supreme Court. Hon'ble Defence Minister always thinks in terms of international and not of national level. He said that in the matter of Orissa it is an international conspiracy. After saying so, there is no need to conduct an inquiry. Is it not true that an erosion of your votes and Hindu Card has been going on. You have spread the people all around. We would like to congratulate Shri Khuranajee that he has acted like Vibhisana while living with Ravana clan and had to make sacrifice. As regards deteriorating condition it has been said by the whole world that you are ruining the poor of the minorities. You tell as to whether it is true or not that you could not save the Christians inspite of their giving in writing that they apprehend attack?

SHRI SHANKER PRASAD JAISWAL : You speak about Jehanabad.

SHRI LALU PRASAD : About Jahanabad, I want to say that the Samta party and BJP are the real brothers of Ranveer Sena.

[English]

SHRI L.K. ADVANI : There is no question, Sir. He has complimented Khuranaji.

[Translation]

I too, agree with the fact that hon. Khuranajee is our outstanding worker, he is doing a tremendous job...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI LALU PRASAD : He is finding himself unable to reply.

MR. SPEAKER : We are not asking questions, so he is not replying.

SHRI LALU PRASAD : We are supporting you, then why are you not able to reply?

SHRI PURNO A. SANGMA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, what has been happening, and is still happening, appears to be very well-planned. The Commission which has been constituted is there to look into a specific incident. But the way things are happening, it seems that these are well-planned. It has never

happened in the country before. Christians have never become the victims of atrocities. Why has it happened suddenly now? Has the Government tried to analyse as to what are the reasons and the motives? I would like to know whether the Government tried to analyse the reasons for this.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI : So far as communal harmony is concerned, any disruption of communal harmony is a serious matter and the Government would like to ensure that it does not happen. Over the years, we had been witnessing clashes between Hindus and Muslims principally. The year 1998 has been remarkably free from major riots of that nature...*(Interruptions)*

I have said 'major riots'...*(Interruptions)* There were incidents in Secundrabad. But this particular phenomenon certainly needs analysis which we are carrying on. At the moment, we are concerned with seeing that if any incident happens, immediately the Government takes action. I found out that even in respect of Christians, in earlier years there used to be incidents but mainly in Orissa and Arunachal Pradesh and I have analysed that these incidents were mainly in the tribal regions. So, what has happened in these recent years also is, in a way, related to what had been happening earlier, though on a larger scale. All these things deserve to be analysed personally, and that process is on.

I can assure Shri Sangama that we will see that this does not happen. After all, the image of the Government image is affected; and the country's image is affected all over the world. This is a matter of concern to all of us. I share with you, your anguish and I can assure the House that from our side nothing will be wanting to see that this does not happen.

MR. SPEAKER : Now, Question no.2.

(Interruptions)

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, you said that you will call me and I was very disciplined. Please call out my name. I have a small question to raise relating to Question No.1.

MR. SPEAKER : On the third Question, I will allow you. Please take your seat.

(Interruptions)

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : There are several other aspects....*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : There is also another question.

(Interruptions)