

Regarding problems faced by pilgrims visiting Sabarimala

SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN (KOLLAM): Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Union Government to a very serious situation which is prevailing in one of the most important pilgrimage places in India, that is, Sabarimala in the State of Kerala. The hardships and the sufferings of the pilgrims in Sabarimala are too much because lakhs and lakhs of people are coming to Sabarimala for darshan during the Makaravilakku and Mandala Vilakku seasons. Now this is the season of Mandala Vilakku. Lakhs of people are there.

The quite unfortunate thing to be noted is that the State police as well as the Devaswom authorities have not made proper arrangements and facilities for the pilgrims to have a better darshan in Sabarimala. It is because of the lack of proper facilities and arrangements, the people have been suffering like anything. The pilgrims have to stand in the queue for 18-20 hours to have the darshan. One girl pilgrim has died while she was in the queue. That incident has also happened. So far, no facilities or arrangements have been done. Nothing is being done.

In the normal course, so many meetings by the Chief Minister will take place but it is quite unfortunate to note that the situation is very, very serious.

We, all the Members from Kerala, are making this demand. What is the role of the Union Government? That is the question the hon. Chairman is asking. I know it very well. My suggestion is, we are seeking the intervention of the Union Government for giving support and aid. By way of the National Disaster Management Authority, the Union Government has to give support and aid to the State of Kerala so as to make the condition good for the pilgrims. Otherwise, it will become a big casualty. It is a very serious issue. That is to be responded by the Government.

Sir, we are seeking a response from the Government also.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Mr. Premachandran, you very well remember I had met you at Sabarimala on the day of Makar Sankranti some years ago.

SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN: Yes, Sir.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Now, Mr. Anto Antony.

? (*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Are you associating with the issue raised by him?

SHRI ANTO ANTONY (PATHANAMTHITTA): Sir, please give me one minute. Sabarimala is in my constituency.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: I know that. That is why, I called your name. You associate yourself.

SHRI ANTO ANTONY: Sir, I associate with the serious issue raised by Shri Premachandran.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: All the Kerala Members, who want to associate with this matter, may please send your slips.

SHRI ANTO ANTONY: The current situation in Sabarimala is beyond the pathetic level. The Sabarimala pilgrims are required to wait for 18-20 hours without water, food or access to toilets. To maintain law and order and to ensure safe passage of the pilgrims, there are only 650 policemen present whereas the Chief Minister has taken 2,500 policemen and officers for his royal charade called, ?Nava Kerala Sadas?. What is happening in Kerala is abuse of power to a level of madness. ? (*Interruptions*) Men in uniform are meant to protect the citizens and the law of the State. Never in the history of Kerala has this happened in the past. ? (*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: It is okay.

Now, Shri Ram Kripal Yadav.