

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LABOUR
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:102

ANSWERED ON:15.07.2002

FIRE IN SHOE FACTORY AT AGRA

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Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a large number of workers died in a shoe factory fire at Agra, Uttar Pradesh on May 24, 2002;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the number of workers injured or died in accidents in various factories in other parts of the country during last three years, State-wise and accident-wise;
- (d) the measures taken in handling the inflammable material by the clusters of shoe factories and the child labour engaged therein in and around the Taj;
- (e) whether these factories also present a grave environmental hazard to the Taj and other historical buildings; and
- (f) if so, the steps being taken to prevent child labour exploitation and to rehabilitate workers affected thereby?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN)

(a) & (b): Yes, Sir, 43 workers have died and 11 were injured due to fire in a shoe factory at Agra. The State Labour Department has made an enquiry which revealed prima-facie negligence of the factory owner who had not taken due care in the storage of inflammable material used in the factory. The fire was caused due to a spark which ignited the inflammable material placed adjacent to the door. The Department has filed four prosecution cases in the Court under the various provisions of the Factories Act, 1948 for the different violations. The State Administration has already paid Rs. 50,000/- to the dependents of every worker who died and Rs. 10,000/- to an injured worker. A notice to the management has also been issued for the payment of a sum of Rs. 84,71,307/- computed as compensation under the Workmen Compensation Act, 1923 for payment to the identified workers.

(c): A statement giving state-wise details of fatal and non-fatal injuries for last three years is enclosed.

(d) to (f): In the Factories Act, 1948 in addition to the general duties of the occupier under Section 7A for ensuring provisions for safety in their factories, specific provisions have also been made under Chapter IVA for the factories where processes require handling of highly flammable liquids and gases. Handling of highly flammable liquids and gases is included in the First Schedule of the Factories Act. These provisions are applicable to shoe factories also where such materials are used in the process of manufacturing soles of shoes.

The State Government of Uttar Pradesh have made three state level surveys during 1997-2000, for identification of child labour working in industries. In the Agra region during these surveys and regular inspections, 165 child labour in prohibited processes/occupations and 626 child labour in other employments were identified. Out of the total 791 child labourers so identified, 728 have already been enrolled in the schools. As against the 142 families of 165 child labour identified in the prohibited processes/occupations, 18 families have been given alternate employment, 18 families have been given alternate employment, 48 families are already employed, 32 families refused to take employment and 41 families are immigrants. Three families are still to be employed.