

persons are the most unfortunate ones among God's creations.

We must have sympathy for them. It is a very long reply covering three pages talking of many schemes. The Minister has inspiration and I am very happy about it. Still, I would like to know from him as to what concrete, constructive, effective plans he is contemplating and what effort he is making to get funds provided in the future Five year Plans for helping these people.

Secondly, I would like to know as to how the Minister is going to monitor these schemes. I am not satisfied with his merely saying that he is interested in it and he is making provisions in the plans. I want from the hon. Minister a straight, concrete, very firm reply on how he is going to organise these things to make the country feel proud under the dynamic leadership of his Ministry and to give a glorious life to the physically handicapped in the future.

MR. CHAIRMAN : All these points are already answered. If the Minister wants, he can briefly reply to the hon. Member. He need not repeat all that the hon. Member has said in his statement.

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA : The hon. Member actually inspired the entire House to help the cause of the disabled as well as to help me advance further. The House is expressing deep concern ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Minister, this is Question Hour. Please do not go into such details.

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA : Sir, I am disappointed on one thing for which no solution is available. That is, the mandatory reservation for the handicapped in Government jobs which is ignored by one and all. I have no answer to it.

#### **Fire Incident in Uphaar Cinema**

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\*82. SHRI DATTA MEGHE :  
SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have enquired into the cases of fire incident in Uphaar theatre and more than fifty other places in NCT of Delhi recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the recommendations made by the enquiry committee in this regard;

(c) the exact number of casualties in the said incident;

(d) the amount of compensation provided to the relatives of the victims; and

(e) the action taken against the persons responsible for such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA) : (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

#### **Statement**

Following the "Uphaar" incident in which 59 persons lost their lives, the Lt. Governor of Delhi appointed the Deputy Commissioner (South), Delhi to look into the cause(s) and circumstances leading to the fire, fix responsibility for lapses, if any, on the part of the agencies involved and suggest measures to prevent such incidents in future. The report submitted by the Deputy Commissioner (South) concluded that all the agencies concerned namely, Delhi Vidyut Board, Licensing branch of Delhi Police, Delhi Fire Service and Municipal Corporation of Delhi including the Management of Uphaar Theatre had to share the blame for their acts of omission and commission which contributed to the tragedy. The terms of reference assigned to the Deputy Commissioner (South) did not, however, include conducting of an enquiry into the other fire incidents. However, a survey of cinema halls and banquet halls in the National Capital Territory was conducted by a team of officers headed by respective SDMs. Another survey of 13 cinema halls and 9 hotels which were due for renewal of permit was got conducted through Chief Fire Officer from fire safety point of view by the Delhi Police. The NDMC have also separately constituted a Committee to look into the status of fire fighting arrangements in all NDMC owned buildings.

2. The Delhi Police had separately registered a criminal case relating to the "Uphaar" incident, the investigation of which has since been transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation.

3. The Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi have announced an ex-gratia payment of Rs. 50,000/- to the next of kin of each of those who lost their lives in the Uphaar incident, Rs. 20,000/- to each of those who were seriously injured and Rs. 10,000/- per

head to those who suffered simple injury. The exercise to disburse this payment has been initiated.

*[Translation]*

SHRI DATTA MEGHE : Mr. Chairman, Sir, through you I want to know from the Hon. Minister that 59 people were killed due to fire recently which broke out in the Uphaar Cinema Hall in New Delhi and the committee which was set up to look into this incident and the works assigned to it were that first it should fix the responsibility and also give suggestions to prevent such incidents in future. But another committee was set up after this one and now a third committee has been set up but this has not yet been decided who is responsible for this incident. Now a separate committee has been set up comprising the Delhi Vidyut Board, Licence Branch of the Delhi Police, Delhi Fire Service and Municipal Corporation of Delhi. But till now only committees have been set up and nothing has been done to know about the person responsible for the said incident, what are the reasons therefor?

Mr. Chairman, Sir, recently a committee comprising various departments inspected 13 such cinema halls and 9 hotels, licences of which have to be renewed and after inspection they were not found efficient but the team of the Delhi Fire Service has not told them about this so far. If efficiency is not there, the team of Fire Service should tell them whether their licences would be renewed or not and the responsibility for the above incident is fixed and regarding renewal of licences decision should be taken at the earliest, what the hon. minister is doing in regard to things mentioned above?

*[English]*

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Sir, I share the hon. Member's concern and his anxiety that the necessary measures which have been taken in this regard should be expedited, and time should not be wasted in all kinds of administrative lapses. The Lieutenant Governor of Delhi had appointed a Committee, as the hon. Members knows, the Naresh Kumar Committee, to make a preliminary inquiry into the whole affair. It is true that the report of this Deputy Commissioner (South) has concluded that all the agencies concerned, namely, the Delhi Vidyut Board, the Licensing Branch of the Delhi Police, the Delhi Fire Service, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi as well as, of course, the management of the cinema house itself. All of them have to share the blame for their acts of omission and commission which contributed to this tragedy.

Subsequent to that, we have tried to identify which were the factors which can be attributed to criminal negligence for which legal action has to be taken against the people concerned and which were the factors of administrative lapses which have to be guarded against in future by taking suitable safety measures.

Now, a process is going on in which the buildings are being checked. It is not only cinema houses but also high-rise buildings in Delhi which are numbering several hundreds, particularly in areas like Nehru Place and Rajendra Place and so on. These high-rise buildings are deathtraps as far as fire hazards are concerned. No safety regulations are observed by most of these buildings.

Then, there are cinema houses, there are guest houses, privately owned guest houses in many parts of Delhi. All these buildings have to be checked up. For example, the Electricity Department has checked 200 high-rise buildings already and served notices on 150 of them. Notices are telling them that 'you have to take the following measures immediately or within ten days or within a month. If you fail to do so, then action will be taken against you'. The NDMC has also inspected 130 high-rise buildings and wherever necessary notices have been served on the owners of those buildings. In many cases, the question of fire hazards relates to the type of electrical transformer which are installed in these buildings.

Actually no transformer should be located within the building itself, it should be outside the building. But in the case of Uphaar cinema also and many other buildings which are being inspected, it is found that the transformers are situated within the premises itself. They are overwhelmingly what are known as oil transformers and cans of diesel oil and so on in order to feed the transformer are being kept there in close proximity to the transformer and the wiring in many places are in a horrible condition. All these and exposed wires which can easily lead to short circuit can be found in so many places.

Nobody bothers about these regulations at all. In many cases, when the basements were inspected to see that no transformers are kept there, it is found that those basements have been sold. The space at the basements has already been sold to various parties and they cannot be traced now. The builders in most cases cannot be traced also. They have disappeared. So, it is a very serious situation.

Regarding the fire service and the police, if I may say, questions may be raised; but let me anticipate it ...

MR. CHAIRMAN : It is better to answer that after Members raise the question.

[Translation]

SHRI DATTA MEGHE : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the tragedy which has occurred in Delhi, the hon. Minister has just mentioned about it. He gave information about Delhi. I will request him that the fire tragedy which has happened in Delhi, may also happens in big cities of other states like Mumbai, Madras, Calcutta and Nagpur. You at least write a letter to Chief Ministers of the states in this regard so that the incident which occurred here does not occur in other states.

The second thing is the inquiry undertaken by the C.B.I. comes under your ministry. The case is currently in the High Court, the Judge of the High Court remarked in regard to that case that inquiry was not conducted regularly. That is your department, when a case is being prosecuted in the court, the work of your department should have also been good enough. You should direct them to expedite the case. The work of providing compensation amounting Rs. 50 thousand, Rs. 20 thousand and Rs. 10 thousand must have been started. So many days have elapsed. The work of inquiry is going on. The amount of Rs. 50 thousand being given as compensation should be raised. I want to say that the amount of compensation which has been announced should be given immediately because they have not yet received it. By what time you propose to provide this amount to them? The amount which has been announced by the Lt. Governor should be provided without further delay.

[English]

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Sir, the hon. Member has made two suggestions for action; firstly, to write letters to all the Chief Ministers so as to alert everybody and expedite this safety work in other States. I welcome this suggestion. This will be done; secondly, as far as the figures are concerned, I must point out that he is quite correct in saying that the Government of National Capital Territory has announced an *ex gratia* payment of Rs. 50,000 to next of kin of each of those who had lost their lives. Personally, I consider this to be very inadequate. I think I may be authorised at least to announce that this will be raised to Rs. 1 lakh. But I should also say that this amount of money is already being disbursed. It is not so that it has not been provided.

[Translation]

SHRI DATTA MEGHE : What I have in writing in reply to my question, it is mentioned therein that the payment of *ex-gratia* has been started and I am asking questions on that only.

SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : The hon. Home Minister is not aware of that.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : It has been started. That amount is being disbursed.

SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : But they have not received it so far.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Many people have got it.

SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Nobody has got it. You can inquire about that. You have been given wrong information. Mr. Home Minister, you may inquire from your officers they have not received even a single paisa so far. Just day before yesterday, the Lt. Governor said that amount is yet to be provided. ...*(Interruptions)* They are telling a lie.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : I have not said that everybody has got it.

SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Not a single person has got that.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : You also don't have full information. It might be that some people have not yet got it but the remaining people have got it since disbursement is going on.

SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : They have been completing formalities as of now but nobody has got it so far.

SHRI VIJAY GOEL : It is easy for the Home Minister to say that the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, DESU, Building Department and Police Department are responsible for the Uphaar fire mishap. But I must say that the Union Government is fully responsible for this incident. I had met the Lt. Governor and asked him to get a CBI inquiry conducted into this. I would like to ask as to who is ruling Delhi, the elected Government of Delhi or the Lt. Governor of Delhi? The Chief Minister of Delhi has written to the Union Government demanding a CBI enquiry into this incident. The Lt. Governor didn't pay attention towards this. Instead, the Lt. Governor got an enquiry conducted by the police.

Before issuance of licence, it is mandatory to secure N.O.C. from four departments viz. Building, Fire, Health and DESU. The Lt. Governor told me personally that the police would issue licence when N.O.C. was issued by these four departments. The Health and Building departments have not issued NOC since last two years and despite that the Police department have issued licences. In this regard, the Lt. Governor said that it would be treated/deemed as NOC even if no NOC was issued by the said departments. I would like to request and ask you as to what is the role of the elected Members of Parliament in Delhi? A council headed by the LG should be set up in Delhi so that the Members of Parliament from Delhi could sit with the Lt. Governor and give him proper advice.

In the Uphaar tragedy. ...*(Interruptions)* I will complete in a minute. There are no two opinions that compensation in respect of Uphaar tragedy is being paid. The Home Minister has announced a compensation of one lakh rupees but it doesn't look good on his part. Each victim should atleast be paid a compensation of two lakhs rupees. It is very necessary, I am going to request the Delhi Government in this regard. The Delhi Government can't function effectively till there is multiplicity of authority in Delhi, till the Delhi Government have its own police force, power and rights to transfer the officers. If the Union Government do not take any steps, then such incidents will recur in future. That is what I want to submit to the Union Government. Therefore, I demand and request the Union Government to enquire into the role of the Lt. Governor in this case and it should also be enquired as to how licence has been issued to Uphaar theatre, whereas no N.O.C. was issued by Building and Health departments?

*[English]*

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : We are working in very close cooperation with the Lt. Governor. I do not want to enter into this argument as to the powers of the Lt. Governor *vis-a-vis* the powers of the Delhi Government. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI VIJAY GOEL : It is on record. It is a fact.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : They are well defined. It is not something which some individual has invented. They are well defined. They can be amended, they can be changed if such things are suggested. There is nothing so far as I know which prevents any Member from Delhi or anywhere else for that matter of giving his advice to the Lt. Governor.

SHRI VIJAY GOEL : There is not a single meeting of MPs with the Lt. Governor on any matter. You have to check up the Lt. Governor in Delhi.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Hon. Home Minister, the local elected Members have a role in such matters and they can always give their advice. But the question that the Member has raised is that in such matters whether the Members of Parliament would be consulted.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : They should be consulted, of course.

SHRI VIJAY GOEL : We have never been consulted any time.

MR. CHAIRMAN : All right. Thank you.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Also, I want to say that as is well known now, we have decided to hand-over this enquiry to the CBI. There were two views about this. But later on we found that people generally do not have any confidence with the Delhi Police conducting any part of this enquiry because a part of it is against themselves. The Licensing Authority is a Branch of the Delhi Police and therefore, the question of how they will enquire into their own conduct arose. So, we thought it would be better to hand it over to the CBI and that is being done now.

One other point, just a correction, if I may make. The amount of *ex-gratia* compensation which has been already disbursed, because one Member here is saying

*[Translation]*

that not a single paisa was received.

*[English]*

is like this. Out of Rs. 7,40,000 to be given in cases of simple injury, Rs. 3,90,000 has actually been disbursed; out of Rs. 5,80,000 which is to be given in cases of grievous injury, Rs. 1,60,000 has already been disbursed; in cases of death Rs. 29,50,000 which is the total amount that should be given, out of that Rs. 3,50,000 has already been disbursed. The process of disbursement is going on. It should be speeded up, I have no doubt about it.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Sir, my question is very specific. The incident of Uphaar Cinema has shocked the entire nation and thereby the image of the capital of India, New Delhi, in the estimation of the entire world population as to what is going on in Delhi everyday. Not only Uphaar Cinema incident but many other incidents

have taken place now. The hon. Home Minister's statement say that:

"The report submitted by the Deputy Commissioner concluded that all the agencies concerned, namely, Delhi Vidyut Board, Licensing Branch of Delhi Police, Delhi Fire Service and Municipal Corporation of Delhi including the management of Uphaar Theatre had to share the blame for their acts of commission or omission which contributed to this tragedy."

May I know from the hon. Home Minister, when such a report is placed by his Deputy Commissioner of Police did he start prosecution against all the people involved in all these agencies or selectively only against the Uphaar Cinema people? I am asking this question because these people are responsible for Delhi, destroying the entire image of the nation day in and day out. Had the prosecution started in all the agencies involved in it I would have had no question or demand. If it is not, why selectively only Uphaar Cinema people, leaving out these agencies have been prosecuted? I want to know this from the hon. Home Minister.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Sir, these are all agencies. Prosecution has to be done against individuals. All the people connected with a particular agency may not be liable for prosecution. I said already that criminal liability and administrative liability have to be separated from each other and they are being investigated. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Sir, what is this? I want your protection. It is not correct.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please wait.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : The administrative liability requires that if there is a lapse in my responsibility to allow this thing to continue either getting bribe or other things, am I not responsible for that?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please take your seat and listen to the hon. Minister's reply.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : So, in cases where prosecution is justified, this prosecution has already been launched against several people belonging to various agencies.

Not all of them, of course. It is because the matter has to be seen on that particular day when this incident took place, who were that people belonging to these agencies who were directly connected with the operation of these agencies. Out of them, naturally, those who are

culpable have to be prosecuted and they will be prosecuted. There is no question of any selective choice of people out of them.

SHRI JAG MOHAN : Sir, I would request the Home Minister to kindly tell this. I am saying it from my personal knowledge because in 1983 I happened to be the Lieutenant-Governor. At that time, a drive was launched to ensure safety in high-rise buildings and in all other public buildings like cinemas also. As a consequence of that drive, 12 licences of cinemas were cancelled including the licence of Uphaar cinema in 1983. Notices were issued. A large number of deficiencies were noticed. Against those orders, the High Court issued a stay order on the petition of the owners of this as well as other cinemas.

Is it a fact that this stay order has been in operation for the last 14 years? Who is responsible for this? One tragedy has already happened. What about the 11 remaining cinemas which have still got the stay order? I would like to know whether it is a fact or not. If that is a fact, who is responsible for continuance of the stay order for 14 long years?

In the light of this, as I have been saying, would you kindly consider the concept of a judicial audit on the same principle as we have got the Comptroller and Auditor-General? The Auditor-General (Judicial) can examine certain cases and take a report to the Supreme Court directly or to a Committee of the Parliament. I have, on a number of occasions, given this suggestion but somehow or the other, this type of suggestion has not even been considered or not even understood.

If the Home Minister has not got the information now, he could give us subsequently. But this is the real serious issue involved in it.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : The specific point about these 12 cinema houses and who managed to get some stay order from the Court in the year 1983...

SHRI JAG MOHAN : I was myself the person who cancelled it. So I can say that it happened in 1983. I am told that it is still in operation.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Sir, I will have to inquire and verify it. I am not sure about it... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : The Government should know this. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let him complete.

.... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : As far as this time is concerned, I can say that after the Uphaar incident, five cinema houses which were found to be woefully inadequate in any kind of safety regulations have been closed down. They have been closed. They are Vijay, Kaushal, Khanna, New Filmistan and Chand.

I am just informed that the stay order granted in 1983 continues to be in operation.

SHRI JAG MOHAN : My God! What I said is correct. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let the Minister complete please. Please take your seats.

... (*Interruptions*)

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : It is very pathetic ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Professor, please take you seat. Let the Minister complete.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Sir, the investigation is in progress to establish if there was any criminal culpability in the non-vacation of stay orders on the part of the Licensing Authority. The Licensing Authority being the Department of Delhi Police, we have also removed that area from inquiry by the Delhi Police. But whether anybody there had a hand in this non-vacation of the stay for such a long period is being investigated and it will come to light as to who is responsible as the hon. Member wants to know quite rightly.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Jai Prakash Agarwal.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : Sir, this Question requires further detailed answer.

MR. CHAIRMAN : We have taken sufficient time. This is the Question Hour. We can discuss it on some other occasion.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : Sir, such a thing has been brought to limelight. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Rajesh Pilotji, we can discuss it in some other form.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : It is such a basic information. The Government did not even open the file. ...(*Interruptions*) This led to the situation. Hundred people have to. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAM NAIK : Sir, if you allow half-an-hour discussion. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : We can have a discussion on this later on.

[*Translation*]

SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Mr. Chairman, Sir, this tragedy not only occurred in Uphaar cinema but several other buildings also caught fire during the same period. Today, Delhi has become a concrete jungle due to connivance of builders and the administration and as a result, unauthorised construction takes place and fire incidents occur. There is no one to check it. The fire brigade is passing through a critical phase. No department is ready to sit and think as to what should be done. When such incidents are occurring in Delhi, has the Lt. Governor and the concerned officers of Delhi Government or the Union Home Minister with the help of concerned officers tried to find out the causes for occurrence of such incidents? You would be surprised to know that out of all the cinema halls in Delhi, only five cinema halls have got No Objection Certificate. Through you, I would like to ask the Home Minister the steps proposed to be taken by him to strengthen the fire brigade further so as to check recurrence of such incidents in future. I would also like to ask him as to what steps he would be taking against the officers, police or administration responsible for occurrence of such incidents so as to avoid such incidents in future.

[*English*]

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : I have already explained that in all the cases which come to light of the culpability or the negligence of these people, whether they are police officers or other officers, action will be taken and they will certainly be punished according to the magnitude of their crime.

As far as the second issue is concerned, I have to verify the figures. He says that most of these cinema houses do not have completion certificates. I will certainly look into it.

I would like to say one thing that at present in all these cinema houses, high rise buildings and so on, there is nobody on the premises who can detect or suspect some dangerous signals that fire may break out. He can give a warning in time. There is a fellow called "caretaker" in each building. The caretaker is a lowly paid employee for whom nobody cares; nobody bothers about that caretaker. The Lt. Governor has made a proposal that Civil Defence Wardens may be trained in fire fighting,

first-aid and so, on. There are about 42,000 such Civil Defence Wardens available in Delhi. I think, if they can be employed on the job of fire fighting and to keep a watch on all the buildings and to be on duty there, that would help very much in giving timely warning.

#### Decline in Oilseeds Production

\*83. DR. ASIM BALA :  
SHRI ANIL BASU :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the target set and the actual production of oilseeds in the country during each of the last three years, State-wise;

(b) whether there is any possibility to get more production of oilseeds from the non-traditional States where oilseed production is less particularly in Eastern and N.E. States;

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

(d) the steps taken by the Government to make the country self-reliant in the oilseeds?

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

#### Statement

(a) A statement is enclosed at *Annexure I*.

(b) Rapeseed-Mustard and Sesamum are the main Oilseed crops in Eastern and North Eastern States. Vast

Mono-cropped area after paddy, fallow lands and riverine areas in the region hold good prospects for cultivation of oilseed crops like soyabean, groundnut and white sesamum with better return to farmers during kharif season, high yielding varieties of rapeseed- mustard, sunflower, linseed and summer groundnut can fetch additional return to the farmers as rabi summer crops. With this view, the Technology Mission on Oilseeds & Pulses and National Oilseeds and Vegetable Oils Development Board (NOVOD Board) are promoting oilseeds cultivation in the Eastern and North Eastern States through demonstration of improved production technology and popularisation of high yielding varieties/hybrids through minikit programmes.

(c) The potential crops in Eastern and North-Eastern States are given in *Annexure II*.

(d) A Centrally Sponsored Oilseeds Production Programme (OPP) is in implementation in 22 major Oilseeds growing States for increasing the production and the productivity of oilseeds and to make the country self-reliant. Under the programme various incentives by way of subsidies are being provided on critical inputs like production and distribution of seed, minikits, rhizobium culture, gypsum/pyrite, improved farm implements, plant protection equipments, sprinkler sets etc. In addition, frontline and general demonstrations are organised of farmer's field to transfer the production technology. The project to promote the-cultivation of oil palm has also been taken up in the country to achieve self-sufficiency in edible oils.

In order to supplement the Oilseeds Production further in the country, the oil is also extracted from non-traditional sources like cotton-seed and rice bran and also the forest based oilseeds are exploited upto some extent.

ANNEXURE I

(Lakh tonnes)

S. No.	State	1994-95		1995-96		1996-97	
		Target	Achievement	Target	Achievement	Target	Achievement (Estimated)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Andhra Pradesh	26.0	21.1	25.0	28.4	24.75	23.65
2.	Assam	2.0	1.6	1.9	1.6	1.84	2.0
3.	Bihar	1.8	1.4	1.8	1.4	2.06	1.4