

At this stage, Shri G.M. Banatwalla left the House

SHRI E. AHAMED (MANJERI): Sir, the hon. Minister of Home Affairs mentioned in his statement about several deaths and injuries. How many people died? We have a right to know as to how many people have been killed and how many people have been injured.

14.35 1/4 hrs.

At this stage, Shri E. Ahamed left the House.

14.36 hrs.

EARTHQUAKE IN MADHYA PRADESH

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (LUCKNOW): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, perhaps you are going to take up the matters under rule 377 again. When the 377 was taken up today in the morning, our friend from Madhya Pradesh, Shri Prahlad ji and other friends had raised the issue of earthquake which have occurred in Jabalpur. There has been a great loss of life and property there. The hon. Prime Minister has himself visited there. Perhaps he wanted to say something as the reply to the discussion or as an assurance but the House was adjourned. Such grave tragedy has occurred. We would like that the Hon. Prime Minister should express his sympathy and should also assure that the Union Government would leave no stone unturned to provide the necessary help for the rehabilitation of the people there.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, if you permit me, I would like to submit the same thing which I was going to submit in the morning that I am much worried about the people who have been killed and injured due to the earthquake in Jabalpur and we have sympathy with them. On behalf of the Union Government I had been there and the required assistance was made available. Besides this, some more issues have come up such as what should be done regarding rehabilitation after the relief. Some of the hon. Members, who are present here, most of them had met me there. Hon. Members from both the sides had met me there. The Hon. Chief Minister of the concerned State had also met me. I had also talked to him. On our part, we have granted financial assistance at a large scale. But besides this, I would like to assure that further assistance would be granted. At present I do not have the information as to how much amount was sanctioned by the Centre but I can give this information later on. In addition to the amount give by the centre, HUDCO has also distributed loans to the people there for the construction of houses and today I would like to assure you in the House that besides this, the necessary assistance would be provided.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I assure the House that we have full sympathy with those whose property has been

*Not Recorded.

destroyed, with those who have been injured and with those whose near and dear ones have been killed due to collapsing of houses.

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI (ALLAHABAD): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a small question. Last year various parts of our country faced earthquakes. At first Latur and now it has hit this place. Some years back earthquake had occurred at Bihar and Delhi also. My submission to the hon. Prime Minister is that India comes under a very large seismic zone and these seismic zones are of different varieties. My submission is that whether you would merely think about expressing sympathy after the earthquake hits or you would elaborate the policy to be adopted to deal with this serious problem being faced by the Country? What would happen to Tehri dam if the earthquake hits Tehri? If it hits this region of the Narmada then what would happen to these dams in future? It is a serious issue.

I am happy that you have expressed your sympathy on Jabalpur tragedy and you have assured of extending all sorts of help but I would like to submit that the Government must ponder over it. It is not a simple issue. The scientists have been forecasting that a major part of India can be affected by earthquake. I would like that the Government should give a statement on it.

[English]

SHRI A.C. JOS (IDUKKI): I want to make one submission.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Do you want to say something about the earthquake?

SHRI A.C. JOS: In Kerala, about 20 people died the day before yesterday and about nine to ten kilometres stretch of road has been totally submerged.

ME. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I am sorry, this is not a Zero Hour. I had allowed only one item to be raised.

SHRI A.C. JOS: Sir, it is equally important. I appreciate what the Prime Minister said with regard to the earthquake in Madhya Pradesh. I am only bringing to the notice of the hon. Prime Minister about the landslide that occurred in Kerala the day before yesterday. In my own constituency, about 20 people died and ten kilometres stretch of road has been totally submerged. I request the hon. Prime Minister to extend generous help to the Kerala Government and to the victims of the landslide.

[Translation]

SHRI SUNDER LAL PATWA (CHHINDWARA): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Yesterday night the hon. Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh had briefed the hon. Prime Minister in a meeting of the hon. Members of Parliament. I had asked him and I would like to submit to you also that the press, public and the politicians there have estimated the loss to be around five to six thousand crore rupees. The hon. Chief Minister in the memorandum, submitted has

stated that the estimated loss is of 900 crore rupees and he has sought an assistance of 248 crore rupees from the Union Government. As per the details furnished by him an assistance of 40 or 45 crore rupees has since been granted. This assessment is an under estimate and the demand is also under estimated and the assistance granted by the Centre is negligible keeping in view condition there. The hon. Prime Minister has himself paid a visit there and the earthquake which has occurred there had more intensity as compared to the earthquake which had rocked Latur. It is alright that the number of deaths there is less. In Latur Earthquake had occurred in winter season and the people were asleep in pucca houses. A number of persons died due to collapsing of houses. Here the earthquake occurred in summer season and the people were sleeping outside their houses as the houses were kucchha and therefore, fortunately around 50-54 persons were killed but the affected area covers 5-6 districts of Jabalpur, Mandla, Damoha, Narasimhapur, Sivni, Raisen and Balaghat. Keeping in view the huge loss of life and property there, we had submitted yesterday that the estimate is under estimated and the demand for assistance is also underestimated. You should show the actual loss suffered on this account.

When the hon. Prime Minister visited there, he was to meet the people there. A colleague of the hon. Chief Minister brought a lady constable before him. She was saying that everything was alright and so and so assistance was being received. It is merely an effort to hush up the matter and also an effort to show their bravery that they would do everything and they have done everything and, it is not the factual picture of the situation.

The hon. Prime Minister can get it enquired into through an agency. The estimate is of around five thousand while their estimate is of around 900 crore rupees and their total demand is for 250 crore rupees. Out of that you have given 40 crore rupees. In my view, the matter has been neglected.

SHRI ILIYAS AZMI (SHAHABAD): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, The Prime Minister has expressed concern over this and has given an assurance of providing help. While associating myself with this, I would like to tell that yesterday I had gone there for attending a programme arranged by my party and I visited several villages of that area. The villagers had a complaint that they have received only 100 rupees each so far.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: It's not like that.

SHRI ILIYAS AZMI: The Union Government do provide funds but it would be better if the Prime Minister constitutes a machinery to check the bungling being committed in the relief works, which has become a part of our history. The villagers have told that they have been given Rs. 100 only so far. What one can do with a mere sum of 100 rupees? don't want to waste the time of the House. I would like to submit that some concrete arrangements should be made to monitor the funds being provided by the union Government for taking relief measures. The money should

reach directly into the hands of the needy people but it should not go else where. There is no logic in providing 100 rupees.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: It's alright. You don't repeat it please.

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am thankful to the hon. Prime Minister for his visit and also for all the help he has already provided and he has assured the House that it will be provided. Of course, these are matters which sometimes are dealt with in an *ad hoc* manner. I agree with Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi when he said that when such a catastrophe takes place, we must have an inbuilt system of tackling the issues. I do not know whether this can be prevented, but I am not a physicist like you.

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: It is sufficient, if advance intimation is given.

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Therefore, what can be done? I want that there should be an inbuilt mechanism to deal with the situation as it arises. This should be done and all proper steps should be taken. I also wish to say that there are many incidents which have caused very serious concern on which many hon. Members have left the House.

We should have an early discussion on another issue, the earthquake which struck Maharashtra.

I hope you will kindly discuss with the Hon. Speaker and fix an early date for the discussion.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I had myself seen the pathetic condition of these earthquake victims and I have also listened to their problems. Through you, I would like to tell the Prime Minister that earthquake was a natural calamity but the people of the affected areas are worried mostly because of the way in which the administration is dilly-dallying the relief work and particularly the way in which relief policy related announcements are being made and frequent changes are being brought therein. They have washed-off their hands of responsibility just by paying Rs. 3000 per house to the people of Jabalpur. The policy announced was that those people would be paid Rs. 15000 whose houses have been destroyed completely by earthquake. But the day we visited there, the Chief Minister changed his previous announcement and said that Rs. 15000 would be paid after rains. I feel that there will be no big mistake than this. Had they been paid Rs. 15000 before rains rainy season, then atleast they would have erected canvass roofs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, through you, I would just like

to request the Prime Minister to procure a list of the relief works done by the administration and to distribute the relief under his monitoring. The policy formulated by the administration should be implemented and the local people should not be harassed by making frequent changes therein. I would like to place on record this submission.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, switching over to other issue, I would like to make a humble request in one sentence. The Home Minister is present here. Today morning, I wanted to raise an issue. Yesterday, 9-10 years old Tarun Puri has been kidnapped in the presence of his Parents. 36 hrs. has passed since then and there is no information about his whereabouts. The Home Minister is sitting here. With folded hands I would submit that there have been law and order problems earlier also in Delhi but yesterday's incident is of a grave nature.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do have sympathy.

[English]

I am sorry, I cannot convert it into Zero Hour.

[Translation]

It's alright, I have sympathy in this case.

(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: It is a very serious matter.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: You can't see the pathetic plight of his parents. Masked persons kidnapped their son well before their eyes. The Home Minister is sitting here. I humbly request to him. So far, there has been no information about his whereabouts. No ransom call has been received. I humbly request the Home Minister to check such crimes in Delhi and to help the parents in locating their son. I request him to tell us atleast what progress has been made in this case.

[English]

SHRI. I.K. GUJRAL: Sir, I want to respond to this. My dear hon. friend has pointed out about the tragedy which happened yesterday morning that a child was kidnapped in broad daylight. I immediately got in touch with the police authorities, the Home authorities and also with all the investigative agencies. I spoke to the father of the child myself personally. I have assured them and I have guaranteed them that the Government of India will do its utmost to trace the criminals. I think it is a matter not of parties but of human consideration and it is a matter of law and order. I can assure and I guarantee this thing that the Government of India will let no effort in trying to trace the child as early as possible.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now I call the last Member to speak on earthquake.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Sit down, please. Let him speak first.

[Translation]

SHRI PRAHLAD SINGH (SEONI): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, several Members of Parliament of Bharatiya Janata Party had come to invite the Prime Minister. On that day also the Prime Minister was told that the policy formulated by the State Government of Madhya Pradesh regarding rehabilitation and other relief works lacks foresightness and it is humane. Shri Advani ji has made some comments and in this connection, I would like to submit that the Government has committed a criminal negligence. The Prime Minister says that the relief works are being done satisfactorily. I disagree with this. A long discussion would be held on this issue and without discussions, the gravity of Jabalpur earthquake can't be assessed. There is a tribal district Mandla, 9 Kms away from the centre of the Earthquake. We have declared Regarishima of Jabalpur district as an affected area.

Just now, the Prime Minister was saying that there the people get Rs. 200, Rs. 250 but to tribal has got more than Rs. 200-Rs. 250. The State Government of Madhya Pradesh could not take decision in this regard. The Government has earlier said that 300 villages have been affected. Today, the number has gone to 3200. Till date, it couldn't be decided as to how many districts, villages of the entire Jabalpur area have been affected therefrom. Thereafter, if in such a situation, we praise the Government here in this House, then where shall we go to discuss this matter. The House will decide this. There are several aspects of this earthquake. There are ordnance factories where in a loss of only Rs. 3000 crores has been shown. Similarly, there are problems related to Defence institutions, dams. The University has got damaged. There would be a long discussion on the issues related to the people who have become homeless and those people who are likely to be affected due to collapsing of houses during rainy seasons. I would like to tell the Prime Minister that the Union Government is responsible for the crime and the deteriorated situation there because the Union Government has given a clean chit to the State Government, which has treated the Earthquake victims inhumanly. I would like to submit that ... (Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: But so much has been said in this regard.

SHRIMATI BHAWNABEN DEVRAJBHAI CHIKHALIA (JUNAGARH): The same situation has occurred in Gujarat also and hence we request the Prime Minister, who is sitting here ... (Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It will be decided by B.A.C. as to whether discussions can be held or not on this issue.

SHRIMATI BHAWNABEN DEVRAJBHAI CHIKHALIA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a very serious matter.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is indeed a serious matter and the Prime Minister has already given reply to it. I admit that it is indeed a serious matter.

(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI BHAWNABEN DEVRAJBHAI CHIKHALIA: The foreigners have also played a role in this regard. The tragedy happened in Gujarat has been unfortunate. The State Government has killed the innocent people by supporting them.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

14.55 hrs.

- (i) **Need to retain 'rake point' facility at Ratlam Railway Station in Madhya Pradesh**

[Translation]

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY (MANDSAUR): Hon'ble Deputy Speaker Sir, Ratlam in Madhya Pradesh has special importance from the commercial point of view. It is a commercial centre as it is an important station of Western Railways and is situated between Mumbai and Delhi. Therefore, it has its own importance from the point of view of railways also.

I have come to know that Railway Administration has withdrawn the 'Rake Point' facility at Ratlam Railway Station, though a declaration may not have been made or an advertisement may not have been published, and as a result thereof, lot of inconvenience has been caused not only to the traders but also to the farmers because fertilizers used to be distributed by co-operative department and farmers were getting fertilizers from time to time through it. It would result in heavy loss to farmers as there would be delay in getting fertilizers. Along with the loss of revenue to Railways, it would also adversely affect the agricultural production.

The sugar mills of this district also avail the rake loading facility and Soya industry also did not face difficulty in sending D.O.C. Wheat, Gram, Black gram, (Urad) etc. alongwith fertilizers, one such items, the rake-load of the half rake load of which have been used by Food Corporation of India, Supply Corporation and the co-operative department fully. People have sufficient facilities inspite of the lack of arrangement for crane siding at Ratlam.

Ratlam is a station which has adequate rake capacity and there has not been unnecessary delay in unloading the rakes. Many cement factories in Mandsoor near Ratlam also make use of this facility from time to time. Due to withdrawal of the aforesaid facility, inconvenience will be caused to thousands of people on the one hand and it may also render the labourers jobless on the other hand leading to resentment.

Therefore, the Minister of Railways is requested to retain the 'rake point' facility at Ratlam.

- (ii) **Need to look into irregularities in Telecommunication Department in Agra and adjoining districts in Uttar Pradesh.**

PROF. OM PAL SINGH 'NIDAR' (JALESAR): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir telecommunication services, especially in Agra, Mathura, Ferozabad, Etah, Mahamayanagar and Farukhabad districts are in a mess, Telephones remain out of order for months together. Nobody turns up for putting the telephone in order after making repeated complaints. No rules are followed in releasing telephone connections. The situation in rural areas is even worse. Poor farmers are being openly exploited. Non-functioning of telephone exchanges has become a common feature.

Therefore, the Union Government is requested to bring about improvement in the functioning of telecommunication services and punish the guilty officials after getting an enquiry conducted by a Committee of Members of Parliament in the said districts.

- (iii) **Need for early start of work on Navinagar Power Project in Bihar during current financial year**

SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR SINGH (AURANGABAD): Hon'ble Deputy Speaker, Sir, global tenders were invited by the Power Grid Corporation of India on 30.8.96 for the 2000 MW Navinagar coal based thermal power project being executed with the assistance from the Ministry of Power. In response to the global tenders invitation eight parties sent documents regarding competitive bids. Tenders of the developers regarding prequalifications were to be opened on 28th November, 1996, but due to non-compliance on the part of the department to furnish clarifications sought by the developers regarding practicability of the concerned coal mines, no bid was given.

It seems to me that unnecessary delay is being caused to execute this project which may help in overcoming the power crisis in Bihar. Coal mines are available in Bihar, and inspite of it, unnecessary delay is being caused in engaging a good colliery for Navinagar thermal power project.

Therefore, I humbly request the Union Government that the work on Navinagar thermal power project should be started early and the implementation of the project should commence during the current financial year in order to solve the serious power crisis in Bihar.

[English]

- (iv) **Need to create a New West Coast Railway Zone in Kerala**

SHRI A. SAMPATH (CHIRAYINKIL): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, there has been a long pressing demand for the creation of a new West Coast Railway Zone with its headquarters either at Kozhikkode or at Cochin. Even though the revenue received from passenger traffic as well as goods traffic in Kerala show an impressive upward trend, the facilities for the passengers are poor. The number of trains and bogies provided thereby are insufficient. The