

[English]

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI (Deogarh) : Sir, the following items may be included in the next week's agenda:

(1) Discussion on non-availability of coal in Orissa for domestic use and also for use by the small industries due to uncalled for modifications made by the Coal Ministry by bringing tender system in the local coal sales scheme and the necessity of reverting back to the previous scheme;

(2) Discussion on the situation arising out of the non-compliance of the commitment made by the National Thermal Power Corporation for providing employment to the land oustees of its project at Kanha in Orissa as part of its rehabilitation policy.

12.12 hrs.

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Fourth Report

[English]

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): Sir, I beg to move "That this House do agree with the Fourth Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 29th August, 1996".

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is: "That this House do agree with the Fourth Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 29th August, 1996."

The motion was adopted.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Now, the House would take up discussion under Rule 193. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI (HOWRAH) : Sir, the management of the Shaw Wallace company should be arrested and Shri Manu Chabaria should be brought back to India from Dubai*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN (Chandigarh) : Sir, Shri Sukhram's son is a Minister in Himachal Pradesh. So long as he holds the office of Minister CBI can not interrogate him properly. I therefore demand that his son may be dismissed from the office of the Minister. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Sir, four thousand employees of M/s Shaw Wallace ...*(Interruptions)*. Shri Manu Chabaria has looted the entire country and he should be

brought back to India from Dubai ...*(Interruptions)*
Immediate action should be taken to bring him back from Dubai ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI NIRML KANTI CHATTERJEE (DUMDUM) : We know about M/s Shaw Wallace but it has been agreed not to have Zero Hour today. We could discuss it later on ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Have we agreed to that?

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : Yes.

12.14 hrs.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

LOSS OF LIVES DUE TO HEAVY RAINS AND LANDSLIDES DURING AMARNATH YATRA IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please sit down. I am requesting you to please sit down.

[Translation]

The Hon. Speaker had yesterday mentioned that there would be no ZERO HOUR. Whatever you have said about Amarnath tragedy would be replied to by the Hon. Minister.

[English]

He is replying to that.

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI (Deogarh) : Sir, yesterday it was promised ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI (Howrah) : Sir, but this matter should be taken up ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI : Sir, we have our points ...*(Interruptions)*. That is why we should be given an opportunity to speak ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I did not hear what you said. If it is related to the Amarnath Yatra then the Home Minister is replying to that.

[Translation]

SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA (Udhampur) : Sir, even if you may not allow me to speak after him but I would atleast like to tell him the situation prevailing there.

[English]

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV (Silchar) : Yesterday we have heard Shri Pathak because he came from there.

We too have got two members to speak, but we cannot go on like this. Let the Minister reply first ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : If somebody else has come back from Jammu today. I will allow him also to speak for two minutes. ...*(Interruptions)*

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA) : When did he come back.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : He says he came back only today. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA : I have come from there today.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : He was present in the House yesterday.

SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA : No, No ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Yesterday it was decided since Shri Atalji has gone there.

...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : That concession was given only for the Leader of the Opposition. A lot of people are going to Srinagar even now who may come back on Monday. Would you give this concession to them also?

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : He is not coming back today. We can not wait for him till Monday.

[English]

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : Sir, we gave concession yesterday only for the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : That is what I am telling you. Why do you not listen to me?

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : I said that because you were permitting him to speak?

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I have permitted him because he has come back only today, and if any other hon. Member has come back today, I shall give him also a chance ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : All right, the Home Minister will speak.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please allow him to speak.

[Translation]

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Sir, I request you to decide once for all. If people continue coming from there tomorrow or day after will you continue giving them a chance?

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The discussion will end today.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : I am fully aware of the situation. I fully sympathise with and understand the deep concern which everybody in this House is feeling and expressing because of this event that has taken place. We cannot cure all these problems only by our discussion in the House. Something has to be done. Some action has to be taken....*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI CHAMANLAL GUPTA : Shri Gupta, you are not giving correct position. Your Government does not exist anywhere there ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Let me begin today by clearing up one point so that it is not raised again. There have justifiably been many apprehensions expressed and questions asked as to whether any proper enquiry is going to be held into this melancholy affair or not. I want to make it quite clear before I say anything else. On behalf of the Government, I am making it categorically clear that there is going to be a full enquiry and that enquiry ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translations]

SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA (Outer Delhi) : Enquiring at what level. Whether it would be a judicial enquiry or some other type...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : When you spoke I kept quite. I heard all of you. Now when I utter even a sentence you start shouting. What does it mean, what do you want ?...*(Interruptions)* I will not speak if you do not want to listen.

[English]

...(Interruptions) I have just stated, Sir, categorically on behalf of the Government that there is going to be a full inquiry into various aspects of this tragedy which has taken place. The actual terms of reference will have to be properly formulated. Naturally, they will cover such points, for example, as to whether the yatra arrangements were adequate; whether they were commensurate with the number of pilgrim who were expected this year; whether the response of the State Government and the yatra authorities to the situation arising out of the inclement weather was adequate or not and was timely or not; whether the concerned authorities had taken into account the meteorological forecast and given timely warning to the yatriks about the impending inclement weather to avoid or minimise loss of life; and whether the authorities have prepared any contingency plan to meet such an eventuality. All these points will be gone into—whether the relief and succour provided by the yatra authorities in the wake of the calamity were timely and adequate or not. Of course, we will also ask the inquiry officer to suggest measures and remedies including giving timely counsel to the prospective yatriks at appropriate stage and to take measures to avoid recurrence of such incidents in future.

Now, this inquiry will be conducted by a top ranking, high ranking official, not belonging to Jammu and Kashmir. Of course, he may be a retired officer or maybe even a judicial officer or even a retired high ranking officer. We will select a very suitable person about whom there are no objections or any questions. I do not want to make a big point out of it. I would just make a passing reference. I would like to remind the House that after all when an inquiry is going to be ordered—that is announced today, so there is no question of going back on that—naturally, the State administration, all the officials who are working there in Jammu and Kashmir will be aware of this fact that an inquiry is going to be held and their responsibilities and their acts of omission and commission etc. will come within the compass of this inquiry.

I am just making a passing reference to the fact that the elections to the state Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir, the first round of polling according to the Election Commission— we cannot do anything about that, that is notified schedule of the Election Commission— is to take place on the 7th of September. Today is already 30th of August. In another eight days time, the first round of polling will begin. The same State Government authorities and officials and most of them, many of them, will also be concerned with conducting the elections. You have to remember this, keep it in mind. Therefore, when we decide, when we give out the final order, giving the details of the inquiry— which we are going to hold—the

terms of reference, who are holding the inquiry etc., we at least are going to bear in mind this fact. It is not a normal situation. If there had been no obligation of any election going to take place within eight or ten days, there were many things which we need not have bothered about, but the election has to be held by the orders of the Election Commission and a large number of people who are involved both in the election, conduct of the election and in this whole yatra affair, they are there. We have to keep this in mind if we are to take a responsibility attitude.

Then, Sir, the other point is that I have some more sad news to give to the House, I regret to say. I had made it clear yesterday also that yesterday on the basis of the data which was available to us, there had been 194 deaths. I had also said that it is not impossible that this figure may go up because some search parties have been sent out now from the various stages along the route and helicopters are also trying to locate from the air, but that is not a very satisfactory process as far as locating the bodies are concerned. But search parties have been sent out and I had said that it is not impossible that this casualty figure may go up.

It is with a heavy heart that I have to inform the House that today, upto this morning, the total number of deaths that have been verified have reached the figure of 239. Of course, many Members here have been saying, it may be 400 or may be 500. At least, I am only going by the actual figures and facts which have been reported to us by the State Government authorities.

Total number of deaths is 239. Yesterday also I had given a figure of 13 being the pilgrims or yatriks who had died before this change of weather and all that took place, died from other causes. That figure, of course, is not changed. After the rainfall and snowfall, etc. began, the number of pilgrims dead now has gone upto 205. Yesterday I think, the figure was considerably less. Yesterday the figure I had given was 165 of yatriks who had died. After the rain and snow began, that figure of 165 has now gone upto 205. The number of porters and ponywallas who have died, according to our information yesterday, was 12. Today the figure we have obtained is 17. The number of security force personnel who have died was four yesterday that has remained constant. So the total number of deaths including the yatriks and the others comes to 239.

Now, the main concern of our Members here from all parties, all States, all parts of the country is obviously and understandably the question of information, lack of information, lack of communication which has added to the anxieties of people all over the country as to what is the fate of the friends or relatives or family members who had gone on this yatra.

I informed this morning that the identified bodies are 139. Yesterday, it was 112. Out of these 139 bodies, 118 are of *yatris*, 17 of local porters and so on and of course, the number of security personnel is the same. How could these bodies be identified unless you know their names? Without knowing the names of these people, they could not have been identified. Those lists have been prepared and I have got a State-wise list of the total number of dead bodies identified :

Andhra Pradesh	—	6
Bihar	—	1
Delhi	—	19
Gujarat	—	31
Haryana	—	4
Himachal Pradesh	—	1
Jammu & Kashmir	—	19
Karnataka	—	1
Madhya Pradesh	—	9
Maharashtra	—	6
Orissa	—	2
Punjab	—	4
Rajasthan	—	4
Tamil Nadu	—	1
Uttar Pradesh	—	21
West Bengal	—	2 and
Non-Resident Indian	—	1

I have got all these figures. All the names are also given here. Any hon. Member who wishes to see this list is welcome to do so. All the full names of these identified people have been given to us by the authorities there.

Then disposal of the bodies — the number of bodies of pilgrims cremated comes to 199. I found out that those bodies which were cremated accounted for both identified people and unidentified people. As far as identified bodies were concerned, they have cremated after taking the consent of their friends or relatives except in cases where the bodies were in an advanced stage of decomposition. Unidentified bodies — they could not be identified by anybody — have also been cremated to this extent. Seventeen bodies have been buried and 12 bodies have been airlifted. Seven bodies have been

brought to Srinagar for cremation by way of airlifting. That makes the total of 235.

In the hospital in Srinagar, there were 96 people hospitalised, who were either sick or injured. The last batch of about 8,000 pilgrims, who have been stranded in Pahalgam, has reached Jammu on the 29th, that means yesterday. And no more pilgrims are reported to be stranded anywhere now. They have been all moved and they have reached Jammu. From Jammu they are being dispersed mostly by train to various parts of the country, where their homes are located and where they want to go.(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH (Vidisha) : But no body is getting any news. There is no arrangement to give information. Their relatives are worried and there is no one to tell the anything(Interruptions)

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : There is anybody to give information or not, enquiring will reveal what the problem was(Interruptions)

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH : There are thousands of people, their relatives are worried(Interruptions)

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : I can not discuss like this you say that there number is in thousands, thousands of people have died(Interruptions)

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH : I am not talking about the number of people who have died. Relatives of those persons have come to Delhi. They are not able to find their relatives. No information is available about them. What are the arrangements in this regard?

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : You first listen and then ask questions. You are not prepared to listen(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You just listen once.

SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN (Khurja) : There is no news about 50 people from my area. They are still missing(Interruptions)

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : You first listen to me and then ask questions. Nobody is gagging you here. Can anybody gag you? Let me finish and then ask your question. What this is not the way(Interruptions)

SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN : How can anybody be gagged....(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : You see, we are in constant telephonic communication with the authorities

there but the telephone also do not work properly. It takes a long time to get through, to get a connection through. I am told that there is a hot line also between Delhi and Srinagar but I regret to say that at the other end of the hot line, even if you manage to get the connection through, there may be somebody sitting there attending to the hot line phone, who is not in a position to give you much information. I do not know whom they have posted there. Now, we were told that photographs of all these bodies which have been recovered have been taken. What kind of photographs if they ask, Sir, I cannot say. I have not seen them. Whether they are photographs which are identifiable of people; whether they are photographs of mutilated or decomposed bodies, I cannot say.

Some photographs are being brought just now. They will reach Delhi. We will have a look at them. Those photographs are being exhibited in the Police Control Rooms both at Srinagar and at Jammu and here in Delhi when they come they will be exhibited. They have apparently not been put on the television. The argument being that if such a large number of dead bodies or remains are exhibited on the television, it may create a lot of sense of shock, concern, panic and all that. That is the argument that they have given. So the photographs have been taken but they are being exhibited in the Police Control Rooms at Jammu and at Srinagar. When they arrive in Delhi today, they will be put up here also.

Now many Members have spoken very eloquently and very constructively also. I should say usefully about the measures which should have been taken, which could have been taken in order to warn the *yatris* earlier and also precautionary measures in order to minimize the rate of casualties. Well, specifically what these measures were or were not, etc. is going to be very much a subject matter of the enquiry. There is no doubt about it. It has to be. But I would also say that this meteorological forecast business is admittedly, in our country, not up to the modern standards. That is why they have to depend on this Air Force Station. It is the only Air Force Station which has proper forecast arrangement. Of course, Mr. Jag Mohan said that they should have asked the local people—this *ponywalla* and local fellow and he would have told them that the weather is going to just worsen and all that. Yes, he could have told perhaps but then on that kind of individual person's calculation or forecast, the Government authorities do not normally, you see, accept such kind of things or go by them unfortunately. So there was no accurate forecast of the weather. And it is true, on the 22nd afternoon which is the last time, that I was there in Srinagar, it was already raining heavily. It was raining so heavily that we were doubtful whether we would be able to get back to Delhi the same night. It was bitterly cold. The temperature had fallen and there was very cold wind blowing. All these took place within the space of a few hours.

When Mr. Vajpayee returns, I hope he will also be able to add some more information to the fact because I believe, I am told that he went up to Panjtarni where nobody is left there now. Not a single *yatri* is there at Panjtarni. But there are some people still there who are in charge of the langars and all that.

By the way, these langars which were supplying food without any charge, were Government langars. There were private langars also. There were some Shiv Sakthi and some other langars opened by some well-meaning and well-intentioned private people. They were, of course, charging something. Perhaps, they are nominal charges. All the *sarkari* langars were giving food free.

Sir, I talked to many people. I do not want to go into that. I did not talk to only one *yatri* who said that the price of cup of tea has been put up. Somebody said, 'why do you speak to only one *yatri*?' I need not have mentioned that even. The fact that one *yatri* complained like this, more *yatris* would have complained also. If shopkeepers were trying to profiteer by raising prices and doing that kind of things, there must be a number of them and a number of *yatris* must have been affected. But about that, of course, it is a separate matter because it is not only at times like this *yatra*, but other times also we find that very often when some traders or shopkeepers are deliberately hiking prices in order to take advantage of people's plight. We are not able very effectively to counteract them which we should be able to do in a society like ours but in many cases we are not successful.

Any way, as regards the people whom I met, I may say I met many people in Panjtarni, in Pahalgam and in other places.

I met many people and about one thing they were, all loud in praise was the food.

[Translation]

We were served very good food and we have nothing to say in that regard.

[English]

There were no complaints from them about the shelter provided also. Since some Members have talked about the quality or conditions of the tents, I would say that I do not know about it. I did not go and live in a tent, but I saw several hundreds of tents and the people who were sheltered in those tents. Shri Jagmohan spoke about water getting into it as there was no proper plinth provided in it and all that. I do not know about it, but nobody complained about it that.

[Translation]

Water entered into the tent and therefore we had to

go out. We could stay in the tents.

[English]

At least, nobody said like that. I cannot say that they never complained about that particular thing. Of course, as far as the Army and paramilitary forces are concerned, everybody was loud in praise of them and also about the local people.

In paragraph 16 of the statement made by the Prime Minister on the first occasion, there is quite a strong reference to the attitude and cooperation of the local people. I must add one more point because it should be brought out whether some people like it or not. After all, these *yatris* overwhelmingly, 99 per cent must have been Hindus. Why should any other person go on the Amarnath Yatra? It is a Hindu pilgrimage centre. Of course, if the figure is not 99 per cent, it may be 90 or 80 per cent. The local people who provided shelter, help and all that were overwhelmingly the Muslims. This is the thing we should be proud of. This is a feature which should be brought out prominently because, Sir, I have also found that there was no connection of these people with the *yatra* directly.

On my previous visit to Kashmir, a few days earlier than this, I had gone to Baramulla and I found, to my surprise, in a meeting that was held there with the prominent representatives of the local people, that there were a number of Kashmiri *pandits*, who were migrants and had left their homes and gone away from the Valley out of fear, sitting in the meeting. I asked how they managed to come back and why they came back. They said that they were businessmen and had some businesses there in Baramulla before they left. They said that they had come back on the basis of the assurances which had been given to them by their local neighbours there, Muslims as well as Sikhs. There are a large number of Sikhs also in Baramulla. The persons — Muslims and Sikhs—who were their neighbours earlier assured them that they had nothing to fear and they might come back, their property was safe, their belongings were safe and they would look after that and see that nobody harmed them. On that basis, they came back. Unfortunately, this Baramulla example could not be publicised or propagated very widely in the Valley due to fear of reprisals. Anyway, I think it is a very heartening thing. Now, it has again been demonstrated by the attitude shown by the local people towards the suffering *yatris*.

Sir, the other thing I want to say is that the questions have been raised about the Governor. In our statements, the Prime Minister and myself, did not explicitly mention anything about the Governor. I can tell you why I did not do it. I may be wrong. I had some idea in my mind — in all the years I have spent in Parliament — that it is a convention that we should not

discuss the conduct of Governors on the floor of this House. I may be wrong. May be, there is no such convention and there is no hard and fast rule, but I had this idea in the back of my mind. If I am wrong, you please correct me.

That on the floor of the House the conduct of a Governor should not be discussed. That is why I made no explicit reference to the Governor. Enough references have been made here — critical references — and certainly this is a matter which will have to form part of the enquiry. The Governor had, of course, returned two-three days earlier to Srinagar as soon as he got the news about the worsening of the situation. Of course, it is my personal opinion that his going back would not have changed the situation very much. But it would have been a signal to the people and opposite signal if he does not go back. That creates a very unfavourable kind of thing.

COL. RAO RAM SINGH (Mahendragarh) : How can you make a statement like this that it would not have made any difference?

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : But I am saying that his not going back, sends a wrong signal.

COL. RAO RAM SINGH : The presence of the head of the administration on the spot at the time of emergency would have made a difference of life and death of 239 persons. Mr. Home Minister, how are you saying that the Governor not going would have made no difference?

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : What am I saying? But all what you are saying is certainly going down in the record and the Governor will read it. So, it will have a salutary effect, I am sure.

COL. RAO RAM SINGH : So, what if the Governor reads it? Do you mean, we should be scared of what the Governor reads? I have the highest respect for you but I am surprised, what statement you are making.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : I am also very surprised that you are interpreting what I said to mean that I am scared of the Governor. The Governor cannot do anything to me. So, why should be scared of him? ... (Interruptions)

COL. RAO RAM SINGH : He used to keep the former Home Minister waiting for two hours. I do not know how long he kept you waiting.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Anyway, Col. Ram Singhji, let him reply.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : I must say, Mr. Jagmohan has made some very useful suggestions

which we will examine in depth pertaining to the future especially. He referred to this kind of terrain in this kind of area. He specifically made a reference to Jammu and Kashmir where some precautionary and preventive measures can be taken for providing shelter and for building some kind of community halls or *yatri nivas* or whatever you may like to call along the routes of this type of pilgrims. There was nothing like that. There is no *yatri nivas* or community hall anywhere, atleast from Pahalgam up to the cave. I have seen the whole of that road. On the way there is no such thing. Nobody apparently there or here for that matter ever thought about constructing such types of shelters which would be much more durable, of course, than any tent or anything like that.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: What about the suggestion regarding roads?

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : The road is very narrow [Interruptions].

I may tell you that from the point of view of security — let us be quite frank before this thing happened — there were references here on two-three occasions to the coming *yatra* and concerns were expressed as to whether it would be safely conducted and people could be protected and all that. At that time naturally nobody could have anticipated that this kind of natural calamity was going to take place. What the concern expressed about was the possible danger from the militants when the pilgrims are on their way. I was told now when I went there that security forces in adequate numbers were provided along the route. But quite a large number of them were posted on the hill tops along the route because if any attack was to be made by the militants it was expected from there. The whole place is surrounded by high hill tops and at some places there is some snow lying on top of the hill. You can see as you go along.

I am not a security officer. I am not the man to suggest how they should be deployed, whether the Army or the paramilitary forces should be deployed on the road only, or they should also be put on the hilltops along the route to guard the route from above. But I was also told that they were there quite in good numbers and fortunately no incident of any attack or anything like that took place.

As far as the apprehension expressed about the possibility of attacks is concerned, I think those apprehensions were very real because elections are coming closer. I found my report there. I talked to the Corp Commander General Dhillon who is in overall

command and he also said that more and more people are being infiltrated across the border obviously with the object of creating some kind of a situation of panic and violence in the Valley and disrupting the elections. Perhaps some people in Pakistan would be interested in that. So, people are being infiltrated in some areas. They are coming across the line of control and there are a number of encounters, I should say, in the last two weeks. They may not all be reported in the Press. But there have some encounters absolutely on the line of control and some of these people who are coming across, I was told by General Dhillon, are deliberately trying to encounter the Armed Forces where posts are there, the forward posts on the actual line of control.

I may also say that some of these people who have been captured, many of them have been killed, of course, but those who have been captured, many of them have turned out to be from other countries, from Yemen, from Sudan, from Egypt and from some few other countries. One young boy of 22 years old was shot and unfortunately he was killed. It is unfortunate for him. He was carrying his passport. That passport showed that he was citizen of Yemen. Many like this are coming. Obviously, they are being paid by foreign mercenaries. It may be sign of the fact that local youth are not coming forward in such numbers as they used to do before and these people are relying more and more on these foreign mercenaries. Some of the captured were asked by the Army "Why should you come on to the Kashmir border?" They have replied saying that "We came because we are told that there is a *jihad* going on. Islam is in danger here and in order to save *jihad*, we should come and fight in the *jihad* and, that is why, we have come."

All the interesting features and aspects of this thing are going on. They expect that there will be more attempted intrusions. But I can tell you that our Army and our security forces are more than a match for them and are protecting our borders quite effectively and, I am sure they will not be able to create much trouble. People are generally confident because otherwise you would not get such a large number of nominations being filed in the different constituencies. There is a rush of people to get nominated knowing they are running the risk. Every candidate who wants protection, naturally has to be given protection. But they are coming. The earlier atmosphere in which people who used to say that it is not possible in Kashmir have elections has practically gone now, especially after the Lok Sabha elections were held there. So, I think that this question has to be borne in mind because within eight days from now elections will be held.

Of course, the question was raised why there was no permanent sort of crisis management or disaster management machinery or arrangement. That is true. There is nothing there. I do not know if there were any. For example, a big earthquake took place in Maharashtra a couple of years ago.

I do not know if there was any disaster management unit at work or not. But anyway, some arrangement has to be made. I agree that we are very backward in all these things. Here Members from Gujarat, from Haryana have told us about the big festivals and pilgrimages which take place because of the excellent arrangements made by those State Governments. We will certainly profit by this experience and learn from these Governments. We will ask them: "What arrangements they make, what precautions they take and what kind of crisis management machinery they have set up?" We will try to profit and learn from them definitely.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : For your information, Mr. Home Minister, in Maharashtra, immediately after the earthquake, the Chief Minister rushed to the spot.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr Dasmunsi, let him reply first.

SHRI P.R.DASMUNSI : Here in this case, after the massacre at Amarnath, even after 72 hours, the Governor did not try to reach the place. That is the difference. I just gave this analysis because you wanted to know about it, you wanted to benefit yourself from it *...(interruptions)*

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : You are speaking about the same criticism and complaint which has been voiced here by so many Members.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI: Please do not make sarcastic comment. I want to be very serious. I was hearing your speech very seriously. But if in the last part of the speech, you are making very casual and sarcastic comment, that is not fair. Otherwise, you were very serious throughout...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: I am the only person in this House who is extremely casual towards all these tragedies! Is it so? Everybody else is terribly serious and I am only person who is so casual and I do not bother about the people dying or doing anything! You please withdraw those remarks which you made earlier saying, "I have great respect for this Home Minister, this and that," Why do you show a respect when you know that I am very casual and I am a callous fellow who does not bother about anybody being killed and all that?...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: We must admit that

today's performance is excellent, remarkably *...(Interruptions)*

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Now I have to be careful *...(Interruptions)*

COL. RAO RAM SINGH : Mr. Home Minister, he is not making any personal remark here. Also, there is nothing personal involved. Please do not take it personal.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Thank you very much.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur) : The only thing is, he has got so many advisors, that is why, he has to prepare himself as to which of the advisors to take *...(Interruptions)*

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : I think, it is not necessary for me to go into further details because all these matters now form part of the inquiry. While the inquiry goes on, naturally we do not go on discussion these matters. We hope that something will come out of the inquiry, not only to fix the responsibility on people who have failed in their duties or have been negligent in their duty or have been delinquent in any way but also will help the country to study and understand more deeply this type of problem and to set up necessary mechanisms and arrangements by which such tragedies can be averted in future. That is all right *...(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAJESH PILOT (Dausa) : I have only two points to ask. He has said that weather reports are not up-to-date. Srinagar has one of the best MET Departments that we have. Every year, before the *yatra*, Air Force used to be contacted for weather reports. I do not know whether they were contacted this time or not.

The second point is about a rumour. The Home Minister can clarify this. There are rumours in Jammu and Kashmir that the Governor offered to resign owning the moral responsibility, but it is the hon. Home Minister who told him not to do so. I would like to know whether it is a fact or it is just a rumour *...(Interruptions)*

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : It is not a matter of discussion here. You go to him and have a discussion with him over a cup of tea *...(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA : I had not expected that the hon. Minister would get prisoner of beaurocracy after being in opposition for 40 long years. He has been saying whatever has been told to him by beaurocracy. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to cite some examples. Day before yesterday two Ministers of Maharashtra Govt., Dolat Rao Ahir and Chandrakant Khare had reached Srinagar. They wanted to got to

Pahalgam from Srinagar. They had brought lot of medicines and other things with them

13.00 hrs.

Our Government could arrange for their journey upto Pahalgam. Ultimately both of them came back to Jammu. They met about 5 thousand people from Maharashtra in Jammu ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN (Trichur) : Is that the discussion ? ...*(Interruptions)* What is that going on ? For how long will it continue ? ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA : The hon. Minister has stated that at present no yatri left at Pahalgam. I challenge him on this point. There are at least twenty thousand yatri at Pahalgam at present. Their beaurocrates have informed him that they have deployed three hundred vehicles for carrying people from Pahalgam to Delhi. Not a single vehicle has been deployed there by the Government. People have paid Rs. 800 to reach Jammu from there. I have myself talked to people sitting in 15 Metador Vans each carrying 16 passengers each. They have paid Rs. 9 thousand to come back.

Railway Minister is sitting here. The whole House is witness to the fact that the Railway Minister had stated all the trains would carry yatri free to their homes. I came back from Jammu last night at 8.00 p.m. Till 8.00 p.m. no such order from Railways had reached there. All the travellers worried. They have been able to run only three special trains till today. The yatri who have returned from there have come back to Delhi only. There are no arrangement for their further journey. The Railway Minister should fulfill the assurance he gave before us: All the yatri are reaching Jammu from there they are to go to their areas. Still they are saying ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : It is enough. Now you sit down ...*(Interruptions)* Normally questions are not allowed in such a manner.

[English]

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY (Visakhapatnam) : What is this going on? We do not want further discussion ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA : Number of casualties is there very high.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : The House stands adjourned to meet again at 2.00 p.m.

1302 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned for Lunch till Fourteen of the Clock

1408 hrs.

The Lok Sabha re-assembled after Lunch at Eight Minutes past Fourteen of the Clock

(Mr. Deputy-Speaker in the Chair)

GENERAL BUDGET (1996-97)

[English]

GENERAL DISCUSSION

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Now, we go to item no. 17.

Shri C. Narasimhan — not present;

Shri S. Bangarappa — not present.

SHRI IMCHA (Nagaland) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, since I am the only person who is likely to speak on the Budget from the North-Eastern region, my deliberation would not be general on the General Budget. I shall not be general in the sense that I will confine myself to the issues which are relevant to the North-Eastern region.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Imcha, I have not called your name.

SHRI JAG MOHAN (New Delhi) : Sir, thank you for giving me this opportunity. Many distinguished speakers have spoken on points which have been mentioned in the Budget. I would, therefore, not repeat any of the points which have been mentioned by my distinguished colleagues. I am told that there is a constraint of time. So, I will confine myself to only one basic issue which I have in view and which, I think, has not so far been touched. That issue pertains to reforms. Much is being said about economic reforms. The economic reforms were undertaken in 1991.

These are being continued in one form or the other. The basis remains the same. In this connection, I have to make a few basic observations. First is, what do you really mean by 'reform'? Can there be a reform which is restricted only to an economic activity — strictly, a fiscal activity? Does the resource management mean only that you do it — particular taxation or no taxation?