

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, it is for the House to decide whether the matter relating to U.P. will have to be disposed of taking one speaker from each party. It will be better. Otherwise, this Bill may not be in a position to come up before six o'clock. That is what my apprehension is. Anyway, whatever it may be, the hon. Speaker has already mentioned in the House today that immediately after the U.P. matter is disposed of, this Bill will be taken up for discussion. Everybody is enthusiastic to get this Bill passed today itself.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let us hope for the best.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Only few Members should speak on U.P. Budget. After that we can discuss this Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN : All right. Who is opposing it ? Now, the hon. Home Minister is to make a statement.

15.38 hrs.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Steps taken to Relieve Aftermath of the Amarnath Tragedy

[English]

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA) : Some hon. Members yesterday desired to know details about the procedure for obtaining the *ex-gratia* relief to the next of kin of the deceased persons in the unfortunate Amarnath Yatra tragedy. I would like to give a brief account of the measures taken in this regard.

Of the 243 deaths reported, the identity of 163 persons has been established. Eleven have been partly identified. Of these, 19 were porters and five were from security forces. The State-wise break-up alongwith addresses of the identified deceased have been sent to all the Chief Secretaries of the concerned States. The identity could not be established in 69 cases. Since these persons also would have come from various parts of the country, photographs of them have been sent to various State Governments to give adequate publicity with a view to establish their identity.

The Prime Minister had already announced *ex-gratia* relief of Rs. Two lakh to be paid to the next of kin of the deceased pilgrim. In order to see that this *ex-gratia* relief reaches the persons concerned without any hassle and

harassment, orders have already been issued to place proportionate funds at the disposal of the various State Governments from where the deceased pilgrims had come. The Chief Secretaries of the States have been advised to place this fund in turn at the disposal of the District Magistrates of the various concerned Districts. The procedure for obtaining this *ex-gratia* relief is quite simple. There is no need to produce any death certificates or succession certificates. It would be adequate if the persons claiming the relief can establish that they are the next of kin of the deceased. The list of deceased are already available with the District Magistrates. A simple application needs to be made to the District Magistrate who would get the verification done through the subordinate revenue staff at the Taluka and village level and disbursement would be made. We have instructed the concerned authorities to start receiving the applications immediately and make disbursements expeditiously. The aim has been to reduce red-tape and delays.

Before I conclude, I would like to mention once again the State-wise number of deceased for the information of the hon. Members :

1.	Andhra Pradesh	8
2.	Bihar	2
3.	Delhi	20
4.	Gujarat	36
5.	Haryana	8
6.	Himachal Pradesh	1
7.	Jammu and Kashmir	1
8.	Karnataka	1
9.	Maharashtra	10
10.	Madhya Pradesh	9
11.	Orissa	2
12.	Punjab	10
13.	Rajasthan	8
14.	Tamil Nadu	1
15.	Uttar Pradesh	22
16.	West Bengal	3
17.	NRI	1
	Total	163

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE (DUMDUM) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have already written a letter to the Home Minister regarding this matter. In several cases the dead bodies had to be carried from Delhi to Calcutta or other destinations along with some companion. What about that cost ? There was no arrangement at Delhi airport to carry those bodies and they had to spend from their own pockets. They are poor people. So, I want an assurance from him that that would be compensated, whether it is Rs. 5,000/- or Rs. 10,000/-.

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (LUCKNOW) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister of Home Affairs for the clarification given by him.

Hon. Prime Minister had made an announcement that an inquiry would be conducted into Amarnath tragedy. Has any officer been appointed for this ? Who is that officer ? With the passage of time, conducting of inquiry is becoming more complicated. I would like to know the decision of the Government about holding an inquiry and when an announcement is likely to be made in this regard.

[English]

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Mr. Chairman, Sir, as far as the point raised by Shri Nirmal Kanti Chatterjee is concerned, he did write to us. Here, of course, he said that several bodies had to be carried. In the letter which he wrote to me he mentioned only one. As far as that particular case is concerned, I am looking into the question of reimbursing the air fare from Delhi to Calcutta and that will certainly be done, after looking into it. But according to Shri Chatterjee's representation, as far as I know, there was only one case.

As far as what Vajpayeeji has raised is concerned, he is quite right and by this time I had hoped that we would be able to make a formal announcement about the inquiry and I may say that for several days now we have been contacting and approaching various persons whom we consider suitable to conduct this inquiry. We have been contacting some eminent officials who have distinguished records with some impeccable service records and so on.

I regret to say that out of four persons to whom we approached directly none of them was in a position to take up this responsibility for various reasons. One said that he was busy with many other jobs and another said that his wife was seriously ill to have an operation or something so, he could not get time. Like that four of them were not in a position to accept this responsibility. But we are hoping that by tomorrow morning we will be

able to get the consent of one other suitable officer who has got a very good record and is a senior officer. We hope tomorrow before this session concludes, we will be able to make a formal announcement.

[Translation]

SHRI VIJAY GOEL (SADAR-DELHI) : I would like to ask one thing.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Rana you are a senior Member and you know that no clarification can be asked on the statement made by the Ministers. That is why I asked the hon. Minister whether he wants to react. This is not the procedure of the House.

[Translation]

SHRI VIJAY GOEL : I agree that it is not necessary to obtain death certificate for getting the amount of ex-gratia but one needs it for the purpose of insurance and other works. The hon. Minister should tell us about the procedure of getting the death certificate. Secondly, he has talked about 11 partly unidentified bodies. He should give more details about it.

[English]

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : I will look into the matter.

15.47 hrs

UTTAR PRADESH BUDGET, 1996-97
AND
DEMANDS FOR GRANTS—UTTAR PRADESH, 1996-97

MR. CHAIRMAN : The House shall now take up General Discussion on the Budget for the State of Uttar Pradesh for 1996-97 and Demands for Grants on Account (Uttar Pradesh) together. The time allotted for this is one hour.

Motion moved :

"That the respective sums not exceeding the amounts on Revenue Account and Capital Account shown in the third column of the Order Paper be granted to the President, out of the Consolidated Fund of the State of Uttar Pradesh, on account, for or towards defraying the charges during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1997, in respect of the heads of demands entered in the *second* column thereof against Demand Nos. 1 to 28, 30 to 82 and 84 to 95."