

Ahamad who was suspected of having killed two supporters of Ranbir Sena earlier.

The Government of Bihar have also reported that 30 persons have been named in the report filed in the Sahar Police Station, along with others unknown. As on date, 22 persons had been arrested. Some firearms and ammunition have been recovered. One Sub-Inspector and eight other Ranks have been suspended for dereliction of duty. The Director-General of Police, Bihar and other senior police officials rushed to the site. The district Magistrate and Superintendent of Police have been camping there since the incident.

The dependents of those killed and the surviving victims have been provided immediate relief of Rs 10,000/- cash in each. The families of the deceased have also been provided with 30 kgs. of rice and other essential commodities. The Chief Minister of Bihar visited the area on July 13, 1996 and announced relief of rupees one lakh to the next of kin and kin of the family of those killed. The Chief Minister also announced a relief of Rs.2 lakhs to the family of Naimuddin Ahmad apart from the offer of a job in cases where the bread-winner has been killed. The Union Home Secretary has further ascertained that combing operations have been launched by the Bihar Military Police and the State Police in the area covered by four Police Stations, namely, Sahar, Sandesh, Piro and Udvant Nagar which are supposed to be the strongholds of Ranbir Sena. People have been asked to surrender their arms and efforts are being made to disarm the Ranbir Sena activists.

While there is little doubt that adequate follow up action including rehabilitation of victims will be taken up by the State Government, much more is required to be done by the State. It would firstly not only need to enquire into the alleged in action on the part of the policemen posted at the site of the incident but also go deeper to check out on the mind set of the law and order enforcement machinery. Then there is the question of empowerment of the weaker sections which always have to bear the brunt of the 'mighty'. A more effective strategy to implement various schemes relating to upliftment of these sections is obviously called for. The Central Government proposes to interact with the Bihar and other State Governments to ensure ways and means to retain and enhance the efficiency of the administrative apparatus in the country. The presence of an effective and responsible administration alone can prevent incident such as the one in Bhojpur.

DR ASIM BALA (Navadwip) : I want to put one question to the Home Minister.

MR CHAIRMAN : Let the other Minister make his statement. He has to go to Rajya Sabha. After that, if you want to say anything, you can say that.

16.20 hrs.

(iv) Air Crash Involving a plane belonging to Archana Airways on 11 July, 1996 near Kullu in Himachal Pradesh

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : Mr. Chairman, as I had promised in the House on 11.7.96, further details regarding the air crash of Archana Airways aircraft are now available and I would like to inform the House about the same.

The aircraft L-410 type belonging to Archana Airways crashed near village Kanda, District Mandi in Himachal Pradesh, about 30 kms. south of Bhuntar airport on 11.7.96. The aircraft hit a tree on top of the hill and then crashed into a house killing all the nine persons on board and injuring three on the ground. The aircraft caught fire and was completely destroyed.

Search and rescue parties from Indian Air Force Station, Chandigarh, District Administration of Mandi and senior Aerodrome Officer of Bhuntar Airport immediately left for the crash site and located wreckage of aircraft and mortal remains of the persons on board. All the nine bodies were charred.

The bodies of all the nine victims were identified and brought from the crash site to Kullu on 11.07.1996 by 9 p.m. After completion of the postmortem formalities next day, dead bodies were handed over to the next of kin, except those of the three Japanese passengers whose relatives were expected to reach Delhi last night.

The aircraft was under the command of Capt VM Malik with Capt S Gupta as Co-pilot. Malik had a total flying experience of about 8,800 hours with 1,600 hours as Co-pilot-in-command on this type of aircraft; Capt S Gupta had a total experience of about 1,800 hours with 876 hours as co-pilot on this type of aircraft.

The aircraft was purchased new by M/s. Archana Airways in 1994 and had logged about 3,300 hours of flying. The aircraft was last subjected to a major check on 24.06.1996. There was no reported snag in the aircraft when it departed from Delhi on 11th July.

Preliminary investigation into the cause of the accident has been initiated by the DGCA and Director of Air Safety has been appointed as the Inspector of Accidents under Rule 71 of the Aircraft Rules, 1937. The Inspector of Accidents along with an Aviation specialist Doctor left for the site of the crash on the day of the accident. Both the flight recorders have been recovered and brought to Delhi for decoding. Inspection of the accident site indicated that the aircraft hit a hill (approx. 8,000 ft high) about 20 ft below the peak. Weather at the accident site was cloudy. Further investigation is in progress.

Much as the accident is a matter of regret and deep sorrow for us all, I would like to take this opportunity of assuring the House that there has never been, nor will there ever be, any compromise with air safety in domestic or international air transport operations. Every aircraft operating in the country is subjected to the most stringent airworthiness checks and our system of regulation and control is as comprehensive as can be.

Even so, and after considering all aspects of the matter, Government have appointed Air Marshal (Retd) S.S. Ramdas, former Chairman and Managing Director of Indian Airlines, as the Court of Inquiry under Rule 75 of Aircraft Rules, 1937 to carry out the formal investigations into the accident. The Court of Inquiry has been specifically requested to give immediate findings on whether operations to Bhuntar airport have any technical shortcomings and, if so, to suggest remedial measures thereof, particularly in adverse weather conditions.

I would also like to inform the Hon. Members that I have directed a 100 per cent safety audit of every aircraft operating in the private sector.

This is being done in addition to the mandatory checks which are already in operation to ensure flight safety in domestic operations.

As the hon. Members are aware, there has been a tremendous growth in the air transport industry after its demonopolisation. Even under this rapid expansion process, the air safety aspect has not been allowed to be compromised. Procedures involving air safety are reviewed from time to time in consultation with the operators and necessary preventive steps are taken. I wish to convey to this House that the Ministry of Civil Aviation and its organisations are making every possible effort to ensure safe air transportation in the country and there is no cause for concern in the matter.

I will conclude by conveying our heart-felt condolences and deep sympathies for the members of the bereaved families.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, all statements that have been made are on important issues and it is natural that many hon. Members may want to speak something. But as it happens, the statements have been made under Rule 372 on which no further discussion takes place. (Interruptions) Hon. Members can give notices on these subjects through other forms and the Hon. Speaker can consider those notices. I absolutely agree that these are really important subjects. This is one way of doing things.

The other way of doing things is just to start discussion by all of you at the same time and start a bedlam in the House. You have to decide which one is to be preferred. You must tell me ... (Interruptions)

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN (Chandigarh): I have already given a notice. (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seats first. All of you are standing together at a time. Let us go through some procedure. There has to be a particular way.

(Interruptions)

DR. ASIM BALA (Navadwip): I want to raise one issue.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Every one is making one issue. One or two or may be more hon. Members may be on the same issue.

SHRI SAT MAHAJAN (Kangra): I want my Call Attention Notice to be taken up.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is in the discretion of the Hon. Speaker. You can give some other notice also and have a talk with him.

Please do have a talk with him. At the moment sit down, please.

SHRI SAT MAHAJAN: Madam, I have given a Call Attention Notice.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What can be done now? Many other hon. Members also must have given some notices on it.

SHRI SAT MAHAJAN: My submission is that Justice D.P. Sood, who was appointed as the one-man inquiry commission in the air crash in which Shri Surendranath, the ex-Governor of Punjab died, had made certain suggestions. He gave a Report. But that Report has not been considered. The Government of India has not ensured that those instructions given are carried out. If they had been carried out, there would have been no such accidents. Had that Report been considered, this accident would not have taken place. (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have made your point. That is all. Since you have made your point, what I will say is that now six Members raise their hands. I will give two minutes each, not more than that. Now, Shri Chennithala to speak.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Lucknow): Madam, two hon. Ministers had already left. Who will reply to the question on their behalf? Now, only the hon. Minister of External Affairs is sitting here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you agree and if the Ministers are there, we can proceed. Otherwise, you can discuss it by giving a proper notice. This is what I