

**11.04 hrs.**

Title: The Deputy Speaker made observations regarding various notices received from Members of Parliament seeking a discussion on the Gujarat Issue. The Deputy Speaker admitted the notices under Rule 184 and allowed Shri Ramji Lal Suman to initiate the discussion in accordance with the Rule.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I have received 89 notices of motion under Rule 184 and seven notices of Short Duration Discussion under Rule 193 seeking to discuss the situation that has been obtaining for some time now in Gujarat. Three notices under Rule 184 – from Shri Basu Deb Acharia, Shri Ajoy Chakraborty and Kunwar Akhilesh Singh – being inadmissible in the form in which they have been given, it leaves us with 86 notices under Rule 184. Out of these, one notice is from Shri Ramji Lal Suman, one from Shri Ravi Prakash Verma, one from Shri Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi, 22 with identical text from Shri G.M. Banatwalla and 21 others, and 61 with identical text from Shri S. Jaipal Reddy and 60 others.

The text of each of the seven notices under rule 193 is different.

I also received a communication from Shri K. Yerrannaidu seeking discussion on the Gujarat issue without mentioning any rule and the same has been disallowed.

Hon. Members of the House are sharply divided on the modality of discussing the Gujarat situation. The demand of the Opposition is that the matter should be discussed under Rule 184. While the treasury benches are strongly against application of Rule 184, they would have no objection to the discussion as such under rule 193. As the hon. Members of the House are aware, there has been persistent commotion in the House ever since it reconvened on 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2002 for the second phase of the current Budget Session. In the process, we have already lost six precious working days due to forced adjournment of the House without transacting any business.

In my sincere efforts to resolve the deadlock in the House, I convened a high level meeting of Leaders of Parties in Lok Sabha on 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2002, which was attended by the Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition and Leaders of other parties in Lok Sabha. Unfortunately, however, a common meeting ground could not be reached. I adjourned the meeting with the hope that perhaps the ruling and the opposition parties would be able to reach a consensus over the matter during the weekend. But my hope has been belied.

Hon. Members would agree that we can ill-afford to lose valuable time further as the essential financial business still remains to be transacted. In the circumstances, it becomes my duty now to take a decision on the matter taking notice of the various viewpoints that have been expressed.

Gujarat situation is, indeed, a matter of "general public interest" within the meaning of Rule 184. The notices of motion do raise a substantial and definite issue.

No doubt, the Gujarat situation has been discussed before in the first phase of the current Budget Session on 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2002. It is not, however, the position of the Government, as I have already pointed out, that the matter should not be discussed again. In any case, the ground situation in Gujarat is that there have been serious incidents of violence even subsequent to the earlier discussion. These incidents have also been widespread in several districts of the State. Hundreds have been killed or injured. Thousands are in relief camps and properties have been extensively damaged. The National Human Rights Commission, the Minorities Commission and independent woman activists of national repute who have visited the State have commented on the gravity of the situation obtaining in the State. The gravity of the ground situation is also self-evident from the fact that the Army has been called in to aid civil authority. The Army deployment continues. In the circumstances, the Gujarat situation cannot also be construed as an ordinary law and order matter which is the concern of the State Government only.

I have also looked into the available precedents having a bearing on the matter. There is an instance when in 1997, a motion regarding "the serious situation arising out of the passive attitude of the Central Government over recent developments in Bihar" was discussed in the House. The matter, which was initially taken up in the House by way of an Adjournment Motion, was converted, with the approval of the House, into a motion under Rule 184 and disposed of accordingly under this rule.

Most importantly, I would urge all the Members of the House to remind themselves of article 355 of the Constitution according to which it shall be the duty of the Union to protect every State, *inter alia*, against internal disturbances and ensure that the Government of every State is carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.

In the circumstances, I admit the notices of motion under Rule 184. As per well-established practice, if there are more than one notice on a subject, the notice which is first in point of time gets precedence. In this case, the notice received from Shri Ramji Lal Suman being the first in point of time, I allow him to initiate the discussion. The text of the notice, which is in Hindi, is as follows:

"That this House expresses its grave concern over the failure of the administration in ensuring the security of minority community in various parts of the country, specially in Gujarat, and urges upon the Government to take effective steps to restore confidence of the minority communities and to protect them."

The time for discussion may be decided by the Business Advisory Committee

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