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Title: The Minister of Home Affairs made a statement regarding the situation in Jammu & Kashmir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, the hon. Minister of Home Affairs will make a statement.

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): Mr. Chairman, I make this statement in response to the request made by hon. Shri L. K. Advani and many other hon. Members.

The situation in the State of Jammu & Kashmir continues to be a cause for concern. It has taken a serious turn in recent days. Beginning June 11, 2010, there has been a cycle of violence threatening law and order and public peace. The violence in the State has followed a certain pattern. Usually, the violence is triggered by stone pelting by large crowds and their targets of attack are police stations, police outposts and other public property.

In the discharge of their duty to maintain law and order, the security forces have been compelled by the situation to resort to lathicharge and, if the lathicharge failed to yield results, to tear-gassing. When all attempts to control the crowds failed and there was the danger of the crowds over-running the police station or police outpost, the security forces have been compelled to resort to firing. While the security forces have been advised to deal with the crowds in a restrained manner, the relentless stone pelting and the danger of police stations and police outposts being overrun have compelled the security forces to use force both in self defence and in order to protect public property.

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**17.00 hrs.**

There have been 39 civilian deaths since June 11, of these 22 deaths have occurred since July 30, 2010. Each case of death has been followed by more protests, stone-pelting and violent attacks. There have been instances where the security forces have been fired upon by someone in the protesting crowds. There is reliable intelligence that some armed militants may have mingled with the crowds and fired at the security forces.

Sir, the Central Government deeply regrets the loss of lives in Jammu and Kashmir. Many of them were young men and children. I convey our deepest sympathies to the families of the deceased. A number of people have also been injured and the State Government has assured that they will be given the best medical treatment. Even while we regret these incidents, I would appeal to the people of Jammu and Kashmir to put an end to the current cycle of violence. I have a special appeal to parents: your children's safety and welfare is our paramount consideration – as it must be yours – and I would urge you to ensure that they do not join the violent protests.

Sir, it is my duty to point out that the security forces have conducted themselves with commendable restraint in a highly volatile situation. They have shown courage and fortitude. There has been a total of 872 stone pelting incidents in June and July, 2010. One thousand two hundred and sixty-six security personnel have been injured in the last two months alone. On August 2, 2010, the Chief Minister chaired a meeting of the Unified Command in Srinagar. I am confident that the security forces will discharge the responsibilities entrusted to them by the State Government and restore law and order and maintain peace.

On August 2, 2010, after a meeting with the Prime Minister, the Chief Minister appealed to the people of Jammu and Kashmir to put an end to the cycle of violence and maintain peace. He offered a dialogue for the redressal of grievances, including a dialogue to resolve the political issues that concern the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Delegations of Ministers have been sent to the affected districts. Earlier, an all Party meeting was convened in Srinagar on July 12, 2010 and certain administrative measures, including ex-gratia payments to the next of kin of those killed in the violence, were announced.

The Government of Jammu and Kashmir is actively considering a number of political and administrative measures that will help restore normalcy in the State. However, the Chief Minister, while affirming his commitment to take certain political and administrative measures, has made it clear that the current cycle of violence would have to end before he can take the initiative in this regard. The Central Government endorses his appeal and sincerely hopes that the cycle of violence will come to an end immediately.

Sir, Government's policy on Jammu and Kashmir has been declared on many occasions. We recognize that the issues concerning Jammu and Kashmir are issues concerning our own people; and they have to be addressed through the political process and through a dialogue with all sections of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Government has always favoured a

dialogue. In fact, in 2009, the Central Government initiated a "quiet dialogue" with key political groups and individuals. I had hoped that the dialogue would open a window of opportunity to activate the political process in order to find solutions. However, that dialogue was interrupted on December 4, 2009, when there was an attempt on the life of Shri Fazl-ul-Haq, a leader who favoured dialogue, and he was seriously injured.

I may assure this House that adequate forces are available to the Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

Sir, in conclusion, I would urge all sections of the people of Jammu and Kashmir to heed the voices of reason and desist from violent protests. Mindless violence and destruction of public property will not lead to any solution. On the contrary, they will result in loss of lives and injuries to the protestors, an outcome that is entirely avoidable and that should be avoided at all costs.

The people of Jammu and Kashmir have elected a Government and they must repose their faith in that Government to find solutions to the problems of Jammu and Kashmir. Once peace and order are restored, I am confident that we can explore the possibility of reactivating the political process that holds the key to solutions. On its part, the Central Government offers its full support to the State Government in restoring law and order, holding a dialogue, redressing genuine grievances, accelerating development programmes, and ensuring equity, justice and honour for all sections of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

**श्री लाल कृष्ण आडवाणी (गांधीनगर):** सभापति जी, हमारे यहां पर राज्यसभा की कोई परम्परा नहीं है, इसलिए मैं अभी सवाल नहीं पूछूंगा, लेकिन आपके द्वारा मैं अध्यक्ष जी से अनुरोध करना चाहूंगा कि जल्दी से जल्दी इस विषय पर, इस वक्तव्य के प्रकाश में सदन चर्चा करे। उस अवसर पर हम शासन से जानना चाहेंगे कि आज की परिस्थिति को नियंत्रण में लाने के लिए, ठीक करने के लिए इस अपील के अलावा वे क्या सोच रहे हैं? क्या कोई उपाय योजना है, कुछ ऑफ़स हैं, जो सोचे गए हैं या सोचे जा सकते हैं, उस पर चर्चा तब करेंगे, जब इस पर बहस होगी।

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN (KASARGOD): Sir, the Government should send an all-party delegation....(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Karunakaranji, we have the precedent in the House that, as has been mentioned by the hon. Member Shri Advaniji, this message will certainly be conveyed to the hon. Speaker and as per her advice as well as the procedure in the House that can be discussed. There is no harm.

DR. RAM CHANDRA DOME (BOLPUR): Sir, an all-party delegation should be sent to Jammu and Kashmir. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down, Dr. Dome.

...(*Interruptions*)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): All these issues will come at the time of the discussion. The Chair has already ruled that hon. Speaker will fix the time.

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