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Title: Alleged police atrocities on farmers protesting against the acquisition of their land in Mansa, Punjab.

SHRI PRATAP SINGH BAJWA (GURDASPUR): I wish to draw the attention of the House towards a very serious and disturbing incident.

In the beginning of August, a group of farmers was protesting the acquisition of around 800 acres of land for setting up a private power plant at Gobindpura, District Mansa, Punjab. They were *lathi* charged by the Punjab Police at Kot Duna village in the nearby district of Barnala while making their way to Gobindpura. The Police used brutal force against hapless farmers resulting in the death of one farmer and serious injuries to several others. I was shocked to learn that the State Government which makes tall claims to be the representative of the interests of the Punjab farmers has let such excessive force be used against farmers who were protesting the acquisition of their land.

I very strongly condemn this shameful act of the Punjab Police without mincing my words and caution them to desist from such inhumane and uncivilised acts which are against all acceptable civil norms.

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Actually, this is a State matter but I am allowing you. You should not give a long speech.

SHRI PRATAP SINGH BAJWA : Madam, I am coming to the whole matter. Not only this State, there are a lot of other States which are undertaking such acts. That is why, I want to bring it to the notice of the Home Minister.

What is disturbing is that this is not an isolated incident. Similar incidents have happened in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and even in Bihar.

In matters of this nature, acute sensitivity by the police forces is required. It is evident that the existing mechanisms that check police excesses are not having the desired effects. Judicial enquiries and departmental action that is normally conducted in such cases does not do justice to the families who suffer from these acts.

In addition to looking into the compensation that is given to these victims, I would urge upon the Ministry of Home Affairs to review the existing measures and create effective guidelines for the Police to deal with situations such as farmer protests against land acquisition.

18.00 hrs.

The Home Ministry should also look at amending the Indian Penal Code to provide for harsher penalties to police persons who indulge in these excesses.

MADAM CHAIRMAN

Shri Suvendu Adhikari --- Not Present