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Title: Need to confer National Award on Late Malli Masthan Babu, Mountaineer, who died in Nepal

SHRI MEKAPATI RAJA MOHAN REDDY (NELLORE): Sir, I would like to bring to the notice of this august House the sudden tragic demise of a very young mountaineer, named Malli Masthan Babu, who died on 24th March, 2015 in Andes Mountains between Chile and Argentina.

He belonged to a poor tribal family. He came from a small village called 'Gandhi Janasangh' in Nellore, which is my parliamentary constituency. He had his primary education at Sainik School, Korukonda, Vijayanagaram District, Andhra Pradesh. He did his B.Tech in NIT, Jamshedpur, post graduation in IIT, Kharagpur, Post Graduate Diploma Course in Management Programme at IIM, Kolkata, and took up to mountaineering then. He climbed seven mountains in seven Continents in 172 days, in all days of a week. Actually, he climbed 1) Vinson Massif, Antarctica, on 19th January, 2006, Thursday; 2) Aconcagua, Argentina, South America on 17th February, 2006, Friday; 3) Kilimanjaro, Tanzania, Africa on 15th March, 2006, Wednesday; 4) Kosciuszko, Australia on 1st April, 2006, Saturday; 5) Mount Everest, Asia, on 21st May, 2006, Sunday; 6) Elbrus, Russia on 13th June, 2006, Tuesday; and 7) Denali, North America on 10th July, 2006, Monday.

Sir, he never took any financial assistance from any Government agency. Wherever he went, he used to carry the National Flag, Bhagavad Gita and Rudraksha Mala with him. He used to give lectures in prestigious institutions on mountaineering and earned his livelihood.

Sir, I am grateful to the Government of India for taking prompt action to bring his body back to the country and buried it on 25th April, 2015. He was unmarried and 40 years old. His old-aged mother along with other family members lives in a small village. I would urge upon the Central Government to help the family of Masthan Babu financially and think of conferring the National Gallantry Award for the brave tribal boy. I hope the entire House will join me in paying homage to the departed soul.

HON. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Bhairon Prasad Mishra and Shri Nishikant Dubey are permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri Makapati Raja Mohan Reddy.

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT, MINISTER OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU): Sir, the late Shri Masthan Babu was really a pride of our country. He hailed from my place also.

As Shri Raja Mohan Reddy has said, he was unmarried. Though he was an IITian, he devoted himself to this passion of mountaineering. Then, he took upon the mountaineering in seven important countries; and later in the eighth country, this unfortunate episode happened. After we came to know of this, the Government of India on a day-to-day basis and regularly monitored it. I also took personal interest.

I am thankful to my colleague, Shrimati Sushma Swaraj who had alerted both Argentina and Chile Embassies and also sanctioned the needed money for the professional mountaineers to reach that place, and in trying to bring back the body. The mother of the deceased Masthan Babu had made a request to me that she wanted to see, at least, the body of his son. So, we could do that. But we could not bring him back alive because the weather conditions were very bad there; and it had become literally impossible for anybody to reach there. But in spite of that, the adventurous mountaineers had reached there and finally could back only his body. His last rights were performed.

Shri Raja Mohan Reddy had also spoken to me earlier. I am not clear what can be done by the Government of India but as far as the conferring a Gallantry Award is concerned, I will definitely talk to my concerned colleagues in the Government and see to it that something is done for the memory of this person. Whatever sort of help can be extended, will be examined and the necessary steps will be taken. I share my feelings; and I want the entire House to really pay tributes to this great soul of India.