

[Translation]

SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI (KHAJURAHO) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, there should also be a discussion on Education Policy, Population Policy, Foreign Policy and on Kargil Report.

12.10 hrs.

[English]

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER

Re : Situation Arising out of recent massacre in various places in Jammu & Kashmir and of pilgrims at Pahalgam

MR. SPEAKER : Now, statement by the hon. Prime Minister.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE) : Sir, I visited Pahalgam and Srinagar on Thursday to study the situation arising out of recent massacre in various places in Jammu and Kashmir and of pilgrims at Pahalgam.

I am thankful to Shrimati Sonia Gandhi, Shri Somnath Chatterjee, Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav, Shri Yerrannaidu and Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad for agreeing to join me at such a short notice. My colleagues, Shri George Fernandes, Kumari Mamata Banerjee and Prof. Chaman Lal Gupta also joined me, along with the Chief of Army Staff. From Srinagar, the Governor, and the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir accompanied us.

Our visit was also intended to assure the people of the State that the entire nation stood by them at this hour, and to share their grief over the inhuman behaviour of the terrorists against innocent people belonging to the State as well as many from other parts of the country on pilgrimage to Amarnath.

The briefing which we were given by the Chief of United Command and Security Forces made it clear that perpetrators of these heinous crimes were foreigners. Arms and ammunitions recovered from them clearly established their links with Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Toiba.

Delegation of local population as well as pilgrims met me and spoke to me about the difficulties they were facing in the wake of the killings.

The House, I am sure, is one with me in assuring the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the nation that we will not yield before terrorism. I may add that while the fight against terrorism will be continued, India will not give up its efforts for restoration of peace in Kashmir.

I made it clear at Srinagar that the dialogue with Hizbul Mujahideen is a part of this effort. Other groups which have

chosen the path of violence should also realise that the people of Jammu and Kashmir want peace in the State. It is futile for them to continue on the path of violence. They should come forward for talks with the Government for redressal of their grievances.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : The House will now take up 'Zero Hour'.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA (GUNA) : Sir, we would like to have some clarification on this. The Leader of the Opposition would like to say something.

SHRIMATI SONIA GANDHI (AMETHI) : Can I say something, Sir?

MR. SPEAKER : There is no practice in the Lok Sabha.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL (KANPUR) : The situations that have been created should not be correlated with any practice...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : But there has never been such a massacre; it is a tragedy of immense proportion. (Interruptions) It is a massacre of unprecedented proportion. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You know very well that in the House, in the Lok Sabha, there is no such procedure.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Normally, we do not allow any clarifications on a statement in the Lok Sabha.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : This is a tragedy of an immense proportion. It is unprecedented...(Interruptions).

[Translation]

Since this is unprecedented so it is natural to question it. (Interruptions) History bears no testimonial of such brutal killings which took the toll of more than hundred lives. (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : As a special case, I am allowing the Leader of Opposition.