

I am going through the list of unstarred questions and I found that it says 'Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance'. My submission is that this is very improper... Will you kindly listen to me on this point?

This House is governed by the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure. Our Constitution—Arts. 74 and 75 provide only for a Prime Minister and Ministers and do not provide for any Deputy Prime Minister. Similarly, Rule 2 of the Rules of Business which is the definition clause provides only for the Prime Minister and Ministers. There is no provision for a Deputy Prime Minister and, therefore, in my submission the term 'Deputy Prime Minister' cannot be used in this House.

Mr. Morarji Desai was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, but, at that time no ruling from the Speaker, as far as I know, was called and no ruling was given. In this particular instance the matter gets more complicated because there are two Deputy Prime Ministers. One is supposed to be a Senior Deputy Prime Minister because he is No. 2 in the Cabinet and the other is the Junior Deputy Prime Minister. Sir, I would like to have your ruling as to how we should address them and whether this is proper and in accordance with the Constitution.

MR. SPEAKER: The convention has been that the term 'Deputy Prime Minister' has been used earlier also and I am simply following the convention.

Shri Vinod Bhai B. Sheth.

12.09 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER
OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

REPORTED HARASSMENT OF GIRLS AND
WOMEN IN DTC BUSES

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Vinod Bhai B. Sheth,

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA (Tumkur):
Sir, the reply of the Minister says

'Statement to be made by the Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs in the Lok Sabha on 27th February, 1979 in response to the Calling Attention Notice by Shri Vinodbhai B. Sheth and others.' My name is also there in the Calling Attention and it is against the procedure to mention only one name and leave others.

MR. SPEAKER: I do not see anything in the point of order

SHRI VINOD BHAI B. SHETH (Jamnagar): I call the attention of the Minister of Home Affairs to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:

"The reported harassment caused to girls and women travelling in DTC buses and the rally staged on February 23, 1979 by girl students of various colleges in Delhi to protest against it."

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI S. D. PATIL): Sir, Government have received reports of incidents of harassments of girls and women while travelling in D.T.C. buses. On 23rd February, 1979 about 1000 girl students of Delhi University also took out a procession from Indraprastha College to I. P. Depot to protest against eve-teasing in D.T.C. buses and inadequate action by the police and the D.T.C. in this regard. The processionists carried banners and shouted slogans. They handed over a memorandum at the residence of the Commissioner of police and to the D.T.C. authorities at Indraprastha Depot. At the latter place the demonstrators also held a meeting where the Speakers highlighted the problems faced by the girls/women travelling in D.T.C. buses. Their demands included firm action by the police and setting up of Special Squads all over the city to check the crime against women in D.T.C. buses

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Similarly, they wanted the D.T.C. to ensure the safety of its passengers and wanted some steps to be taken in this regard. These include wearing of name badges by drivers and conductors, display of registration numbers and warning of legal action against eve-teasing inside the buses, instructing the D.T.C. staff to drive to the nearest police station whenever they are not in a position to handle a particular situation and setting up of a permanent machinery comprising of D.T.C. officials, police and women organisations to deal with such problems.

Stringent measures are taken by the police and the D.T.C. whenever incidents of eve-teasing or any offence against women come to their notice. The police and the D.T.C. authorities have considered the memorandum submitted by girl students on 23rd February, 1979 and have issued necessary instructions. The police have, for example, issued instructions that it will be the duty of policemen travelling in D.T.C. buses, whether in uniform or otherwise, to intervene and give necessary help whenever there is any such incident in a bus. Special squads are also being formed. The D.T.C. has similarly issued instructions that all drivers and conductors will bear name badges. Hoardings will be put inside the buses warning persons against commission of any such crime. A Co-ordination Committee consisting of D.T.C. officials, police and women organisations is being formed to help check this menace.

In fact, the D.T.C. authorities have taken stern action against erring conductors and drivers. Recently, three cases which occurred in the last 2-3 months in which 5 persons were involved came to notice; they have all been proceeded against and suitable action has been taken against them. In fact, services of one conductor and one driver have also been terminated.

Solution to eve-teasing or such other offence just does not lie simply in

police action. It is necessary that there is a conscious and enlightened public opinion. It is, therefore, the duty of citizens as well to point out such cases to the authorities concerned and come to the help of the victims wherever there is an occasion for this. It is equally important that the persons who render such help are not harassed in any manner later.

It is also proposed to give due publicity to the measures being taken by the police and the D.T.C. to stop such incidents, through press, radio and television.

It will thus be seen that Government is fully conscious of the problem and all possible steps are being taken to curb this menace.

SHRI VINOD BHAI B. SHETH: Sir, I rise to speak on the subject at the instance of many women organisations in the City. They have charged that the public is apathetic very much. Now, Parliament, the highest body of this country has taken up this problem. So, I request the Minister also not to transfer the part of the responsibility to the Transport Ministry because the D.T.C. buses might be coming under their jurisdiction.

I request him not to say that. Eve-teasing is in existence from time immemorial because Lord Krishna was also indulging in such practices. That is a spiritual thing. Here there is something vulgar. We have the slogan:

यत्र नारयणस्तु पूजयन्ते तत्र ते तत्र देवता ।

but the slogan is vague. In big cities like Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Madras and in Punjab, U.P., Haryana and some of the other States... (Interruptions)...—as regards Gujarat, girls have participated and changed the Government also and I may assure that I would like to see all, all bus conductors, if it is possible, to take oath that "those ladies who are elders will be treated as my mothers, others as sisters and those who are younger to me will be treated as my daughters" it will be a part of

moral education. So, some civic sense is to be imparted to the persons to whom we have given the charge of protection. But, unfortunately, in this country, we have seen that those persons who have to protect have become the offenders. There is some sort of collusion between the offenders and the protectors. This should not happen. Now, the time will come when we will have many ladies with plain clothes as police women who will be in service. They must be given the training in Judo and Karathi. The time has come when the ladies will ask for arms. The harijans are asking for arms in Bihar. They will also ask for the arms to fight against the hooligans who are creating some sort of rowdyism in the buses.

We want our bus services to be efficient. I may cite the example of B.E.S.T. in Bombay. The officers of the transport service should go to Bombay and try to know how they run efficient bus services there. You should have a network of efficient bus service in this big city. We may have to think about tube railways or suburban railways because the city is fast expanding.

MR. SPEAKER: You are going from one subject to another. Let us confine to this subject.

SHRI VINOD BHAI B. SHETH: We have 2300 buses in this city of which 1700 buses only are in operation and 675 buses are by the private owners. The private owners have given a call to the Government that they are prepared to run the buses at the old rates. The Government should consider this proposal. I am not blaming only the conductors and the drivers. In scooters and taxis the same thing happens. There should be proper vigilance in these cases.

These things should be prevented.

MR. SPEAKER: Please come to the question.

SHRI VINOD BHAI B. SHETH: Drivers are also rashly driving. Dr. Soella Uttam Singh has mentioned this

in Hindustan Times today that there is possible physical contact by the rash driving. She says that there is forcible physical contact, clothes pulling, molestation and even attempted rape. So, these things should be stopped and the earlier this is done, the better it should be.

MR. SPEAKER: Kindly come to the question.

SHRI VINOD BHAI B. SHETH: Let us be fair to the fair sex, Sir. I would like to draw the attention of the Government to say as to what schemes they have in this respect. I would like to know as to why only one man has been arrested. There are so many drivers and so many conductors who have committed the crime. I am very unhappy to note that only one person has been arrested and prosecution has been launched against him. This is not fair. I would therefore request the hon. Minister to give us a categorical reply. Of course, I would say a word on the girls also. It is a charge made against the modern girls that they attract the drivers and the conductors. It is their skirvy dress, jean culture, midi, maxi and mini culture, that attracts the attention of the conductors and the drivers also. What steps are you going to take, apart from invoking the citizen's awareness, consciousness, patriotism and sense of citizenship etc? What concrete steps the Government is going to take? How will the persons who are prepared to inform the police be protected? There are some persons who like to give protection to ladies. But Government does not give protection to them. He has to undergo long drawn-out litigation in the courts of Law. I would like to have a specific reply from the Government. What concrete steps the Minister has taken or he is going to take in this matter?

SHRI S. D. PATIL: Many of the suggestions made by the hon. Member are really suggestions for action.

I agree with him that unless there is proper education and civic sense developed among our citizens, this question which is a social problem, cannot be

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solved adequately. But I do not agree with him when he made a statement that Government is trying to transfer this responsibility from itself to the Transport Authority. No, Sir. Government has already issued instruction. As far as Police are concerned we have already said this. We have arrangements at district control rooms for receiving specific information about eve-teasing for taking immediate follow-up action, even where the information is anonymous.

Secondly, we have issued instructions for the formation of special squads in each district for dealing with eve-teasing and pick-pocketing. We have also issued instruction for detaching men in uniform or plain clothes in buses to check eve-teasing. Instructions have been issued for listing out the Girls/Women's colleges and institutions and to have regular fortnightly visits to them by the police officers. Instructions have been given for giving wide publicity to action taken against the eve-teasers. These are the actions which have been taken.

MR. SPEAKER: He asked a question. How is it that in spite of so many incidents, only one driver has been arrested?

SHRI S. D. PATIL: The growing population of the city and certain evils of the modern age are responsible for all these things.

MR. SPEAKER: He asked: Why was only one man arrested?

SHRI S. D. PATIL: I have mentioned in my statement that recently 3 cases came to notice during the last two or three months in which five persons were involved. They have all been proceeded against and suitable action has been taken against them. In fact, the services of one conductor and one driver has been terminated.

So, action has been taken in these cases.

The DTC authorities have also issued instructions. These are the five instructions. Whenever specific instances against drivers and conductors are brought to notice of the DTC authorities, stringent action is taken. They will resort even to terminate the services of drivers and conductors involved. Instructions have been issued asking drivers and conductors to wear name badges. They have also been asked to intervene efficiently whenever any one is found misbehaving with ladies in buses. In extreme cases they have been given discretion to drive buses to the nearest police stations.

MR. SPEAKER: You have mentioned that.

SHRI S. D. PATIL: So, these instructions are there. In my statement also I have mentioned many of the steps which have been taken.

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA (Tumkur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, at the very outset, I would like to register my protest against the manner in which the names of the Members who have sponsored this Calling Attention have been indicated in the statement of the Minister of State for Home Affairs. It only shows the light-heartedness and the callousness with which they treat such questions. I would request the hon. Speaker to come to our rescue and protect our interests.

We are aware of the manner in which the Janata Government has been treating such problems. A lot of vulgarism, vandalism and this eve-teasing has been going on even in a city like Delhi. There is absolutely no law and order here for the last two years. There is an organised effort in an organised sector like DTC to indulge in eve-teasing. Even the conductors and drivers are a party to it. It is free for all in DTC buses. The press has been highlighting this consistently, but the situation has not improved and we

have to hang our heads in shame that the girls from various colleges had to take out a protest march to draw the attention of the Government to this problem. You say that you are conscious of the equality of women and their status. I do not know how you can claim that.

The Minister of State for Home Affairs has only given details about the demonstration, but he has not suggested any remedial measures for this evil. He says only that this is a social problem. There is an article in the Hindustan Times today 'An eye x-rays eve-teasing' where the reporter states:

"We decided to discuss the problem and its possible causes with Dr. Shiela Uttam Singh, a teacher since 1946 and Principal of Indraprastha College for the last five years. She agrees that eve-teasing is so rampant now that even the university campus offers no immunity to girls on their way to and from lectures and functions."

The police is also not effective in this matter. When certain rowdy elements outrageously molest the girls, travelling in the DTC buses, the drivers and the conductors are not helpful to the girls at all. On several occasions, they are not prepared to stop the bus and protect them. The travelling public in the buses also become passive spectators to the situation in a helpless manner. The girls scream and cry, but nobody would come to their rescue.

Then, the population in Delhi has increased tremendously. The number of DTC buses has not been increased to keep pace with that and to meet the ever-increasing demand. Why can't you increase the bus facilities for the students? What is the action that has been proposed by the Government to bring about an improvement in the situation? Has the police or Home Ministry suggested any remedial measures?

The Minister of State for Home Affairs has given only two incidents, whereas about six incidents have taken place. One of the employees of our Parliament House was narrating an incident yesterday. He was travelling in a bus along with his wife. He and his wife and other persons had to close their eyes because of the manner in which some boys were teasing the girls. The whole bus was jam-packed and there was no room in it. While this was going on, nobody asked the driver or the conductor to stop the bus. This is not a small matter to be taken casually by the Home Minister. This is not a party question either. Vandalism, vulgarity, molestation and outraging of modesty of women inside the DTC buses should be stopped—but not by shedding crocodile tears. Stringent action has not been taken so far. Conductors and drivers have failed to identify people who are responsible. The number of such incidents is increasing inside the DTC buses. To solve this, and to relieve the congestion experienced by the travelling public, will the Minister examine the question and suggest to the DTC that they should increase the number of buses? Secondly, will he take up this matter in the highest body, so that he can see to it that separate buses are provided for the women and girls—as it is done in Tamil Nadu? Government is in a helpless situation, because there are loopholes in the legislations regarding booking of such culprits. Will he bring in suitable change in the legislations? Such incidents should be stopped immediately, and those culprits should also be booked immediately. Will the Minister consider these 3 suggestions, keeping in view that we should give a better—and equal—treatment to our women?

SHRI S. D. PATIL: Many a time I have seen Mr. Lakkappa to be very humorous and comic. To-day he is angry. I do not know why he is so much angry to-day. His wrath is directed towards the Home Ministry. I cannot read between the lines and find why he is so much perturbed. (Interruptions) It is a common, social

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evil. There is no denying the fact. From whatever source the complaints come, whether they are from the Principal or the general public, it is an admitted fact. The various suggestions made by the hon. Member viz. increase in buses, change in the law, separate buses for girls, plugging loopholes in the legislation etc. will be examined. About the recent incident seen by the employee in Parliament House, it has not yet come to our notice. If a specific instance comes to notice, we will look into it. There also, it is the duty of the passengers who are travelling, to help when they personally see such situations.

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOO-WALIA (Faridkot): That day, the young girls took out the procession. There was a placard on which it was written, "When women are degraded, why is the public silent?" I am thankful to you, Sir, that by admitting this Calling Attention, you have removed the allegation and proved that when our young daughters are harassed, not only the public but the whole of Parliament is not silent. I congratulate you on this. I very much protest against the manner in which the Administration is running the buses.

It has been said that Police should be posted. Posting the police is not the only remedy. Actually, the system, the whole Administration is defective. All these things have started because of our films. The Indian films are so bad in films the hero, the vulgar type of her starts teasing the heroine, and ultimately, the heroine succumbs to his activities. This kind of a story very much results in the increase of such types of activities. Actually the effect of the culture is reflected in the activities of the youth. The situation in the city is so grave that after 4 or 5 or 6 P.M. if you go to the bazaars or go inside the city, everywhere in the bus stops there are long queues of 400 to 500 people. Suppose a young girl, a student or employee, after finishing the work at 5 P.M. comes to the bus stop,

he or she is able to get the bus only by 7 P.M. For two hours he or she has to wait. Eve-teasing is due to overcrowding in buses. This is the root cause. There is also pilferage of spare parts of buses and frequently trips of DTC buses are missed. The administration is so loose that though the number of passengers has doubled in the last years, yet DTC is showing loss in its accounts. The number of buses are the same. I humbly suggest to the Minister to ensure that missing of trips is stopped. He should also arrange to stop the pilfering of spare parts of the buses, which are being sold in spare part shops after 1 or 2 months of the coming of the buses on the road. Will he also arrange deploying more mini buses during peak hours or enabling people to reach their offices, schools or colleges and also between 5 P.M to 7 P.M.

MR. SPEAKER: These are to be answered by the Minister of Transport. He will pass them on to him.

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOO-WALIA: Lastly, will he deploy women police in double numbers of room now onwards?

SHRI S. D. PATIL: Sir, I will pass on the hon. members suggestions to the Transport Minister and DTC. As far as the administration is concerned, we on our part are detailing the police at places which can be identified as trouble spots for eve-teasing. We have also taken sufficient care to see that name badges are given to the drivers and conductors. It is equally the duty of the general public to come to the help of the victims. If some voluntary organisations are organised on some basis to meet this trouble it would be in the interests of everybody. About the need to increase the buses, I will pass it on to the DTC authorities. They have got their own difficulties, but we will pass on the suggestion to them. As far as the Government is concerned, it is not possible to detail a policeman or police woman in every place. It is not feasible and it is not financially possible.