

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Thursday, May, 24, 1990/Jyaistha 3, 1912
(Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[Translation]

Fire incidents in Delhi

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*963. SHRI UTTAM RATHOD:
SHRI HARI KEWAL PRASAD:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of incidents of outbreak of fire in Delhi during the current year so far;

(b) the causes of fire, the number of persons injured and killed in these fire incidents and the extent of loss caused to property; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government for rehabilitation of fire victims?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMED SAYEED): (a) 2261 incidents of fire took place in Delhi from

1st January, 1990 to 30th April, 1990.

(b) The causes of fire have generally been found to be:

1. Electoral short-circuit;
2. Overloading of electric installations;
3. Leakage of cooking gas;
3. Industrial processing;
4. Careless smoking.

The number of persons from the public who died in these fires is 13 and those injured is 18. The extent of loss caused in all these fires has not been determined.

(c) Government have been providing *ex-gratia* relief where warranted.

[English]

SHRI UTTAM RATHOD: While replying to this question, I would like to know whether the Government have considered only the towering inferno or you have also undergone to take some trouble to study the causes of fire in *jhuggi jhonparis* because there have been so many *jhuggi jhonpari* accidents. What were the reasons? I am interested in knowing that and not about the high buildings.

SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMAD SAYEED: As far as *jhuggi jhonparis* are concerned, generally reasons are not known. As you know, there can be many causes of fire.

There are many reasons. Reasons are not known. Accidental fires are also there. (*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI UTTAM RATHOD: I have still not received the answer to my first question, I had asked about the causes of the fire.

MR. SPEAKER: Mufti Saheb, he asked whether you have got the matter investigated.

SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMAD SAYEED: Investigation was conducted to know whether there was any sabotage in these incidents, but it was found that no such thing was there. The Jhuggi Jhopris were not set ablaze deliberately by anyone and it was just an accident like any other fire accidents.

SHRI UTTAM RATHOD: It has been observed that during the last one and a half months, five fire incidents have taken place in the areas where Jhuggi Jhoparis are located. It is surprising that the Minister has replied to the questions pertaining to the big buildings but he has not found any sabotage in respect of the fire in jhuggi jhoparis. Thousands of huts are burnt, loss worth millions of rupees is suffered and people are rendered homeless but he does not pay any attention to it. I fail to understand why the Government could not established the cause of fire.

Whether it is not true that when mucslesmen are not paid their weekly, they set ablaze jhuggis? Have you not found any such incident?

SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMAD SAYEED: We investigated into the matter through Delhi Police in order to see if some people were involved in these incidents but no such thing could be proved.

SHRI JAG PAL SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the manner in which the hon. Home Minister has replied to this question of grave consequence shows that he has not got any investigation conducted no behalf of the

Government, into the fire accident especially that of jhuggi jhoparis. Had he got any such investigation done, then this house should have been informed of the cause which lead to fire in the jhuggi jhopris. Although the cause has not been revealed, yet it is a fact that there must be some causes which lead to these fire incidents.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister has already said that police have investigated into the matter, you ask the question.

SHRI JAG PAL SINGH: I am asking question. Will the hon. Minister enlighten me and the House whether the cause of this fire is the connivance between the bureaucrats and the colonisers? I do not want to impute any motives to any political party but this doubt crops up on the basis of news reports as to whether the colonisers and bureaucrats are conniving in this activity. The way in which the unauthorised colonies and jhuggi-jhopris are being set ablaze creates a suspicions as if this is being done to grab those sites.

SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMAD SAYEED: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government has provided assistance to reconstruct huts in those areas where they were destroyed by fire and, therefore, the involvement of the colonisers is not established as the cause of this fire. You must have seen that since the huts are constructed very close to each other and since they are in cluster, the fire raged in one area on account of some inflammable material spreads rapidly to all the areas. (*Interruptions*)

KUMARIMAYAWATI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, a probe into the incidents of fire in the jhuggi jhopris of Delhi through Delhi Police was conducted but the cause of these fire incidents could not be established. I would like to inform the House that between 14th to 30th April, nearly 17,000 huts were reduced to ashes in Delhi and more than one lakh people were rendered homeless. When a fire broke out in the Gandhi Gali of Sadar Bazar on the 16th of April, a special inquiry committee was set up in the old secretariat

for investigation but ironically, not a single such committee has been formed in the old secretariat to investigate into the fire incidents, which gutted thousands of huts. A dharna is being staged by the Bahujan Samaj Party outside the old secretariat and our demand is that, to conduct an investigation into the fire incidents, an enquiry committee should be set up in this regard as was done in respect of Gandhi Gali. In that case, action was taken immediately because of the fact that businessmen and influential people were involved whereas no enquiry committee has been set up till date to investigate into the outbreak of fire which gutted the huts of the people belonging to weaker sections. I would like to mention that, ever since the Bahujan Samaj Party started a dharna outside old secretariat, the fire incidents in the slums of Delhi have almost stopped, because it has not been realised that the weaker sections have awakened. (*Interruptions*)

I would like to know as to why no investigation has been conducted so far? Will an enquiry committee be set up to investigate into the incidents in which the Jhuggis of the people belonging to weaker sections were gutted?

SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMAD SAYEED: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is necessary to get an inquiry conducted to know the cause of fire in the jhuggis where people belonging to weaker sections live. Fire incidents have taken place in different colonies and there is no conspiracy in it. I had directed the police commissioner to investigate fully and the enquiry has revealed that no sabotage was involved.

If you talk of fire incidents in Vigyan Bhawan and Sadar Bazar, certain preventive steps were taken but still a fire broke out there. If fire breaks out even after taking all the preventive measures, it definitely required investigation. As regards jhuggi jhopris, poor people live in these units, they use chullas and once fire breaks out at one place it engulfs the entire area. I want to assure the hon. Members that we have got the matter investigated fully and no one has been found guilty. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI TARIF SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the moment the new Government announced that they would issue ration cards to jhuggi jhopari dwellers, Congressmen in collusion with the police constructed some new jhuggis. When ration cards were not issued to the people belonging to Congress, who had got the jhuggis constructed and had spent money, they planned to set the jhuggis afire, with the aim that it would attract the attention of the Government and they would issue ration cards. They will also get the money. A fire incident took place in Jawalपुरi PUC market. (*Interruptions*)

There were certain wholesale traders as well as retailers in the PUC market, where the fire broke out. The big traders set the place ablaze to remove small traders from that place. This is the fourth incident. Whether the hon. Home Minister will order an inquiry into it? I myself visited the spot. The people from Congress did not allow us to talk to the people and they hooted us. Whether, it will be looked into?

SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMAD SAYEED: Sir, I have already stated that it has been investigated. No group or person could be identified who might have sparked off the fire.

SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as per my information, prior to November 1989 whenever a fire incident occurred, the Delhi Administration used to pay Rs. 250/- per jhuggi. The new Government has increased the amount to Rs. 500/- I want to know whether Government propose to provide relief like bread or cereals to jhuggi jhopari dwellers in case of breaking out of fire?

Besides, according to press reports in the fire that broke out near Samaypur Badali, there was nothing in the huts and unoccupied jhuggis were burnt. Police nabbed 3-4 people as per the information available with me. Police gave a statement that it was their duty to help the jhuggi jhopari dwellers. This can happen at other places also. Are you thinking in terms of getting an impartial

magisterial inquiry conducted as to how so many jhuggi jhoparis were gutted.

SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMAD SAYEED: Mr. Speaker, Sir, jhuggis are generally constructed without proper permission. They do not have proper approval of the Government. Basic minimum needs like water supply, sanitation, roads are not available there. The Government has to rehabilitate them after the fire incidents. On one issue, I agree with the hon. Member that we shall have to take special steps to ensure that fire incidents do not recur in these localities and we want to do something in this regard.

SHRIMATI JAYWANTI NAVINCHANDRA MEHTA: In reply to the question, the hon. Minister has said that 2261 fire incidents have taken place between 1st January and 30th April. This is an aggregate. I would like to know the details of incidents of fire in jhuggi jhoparis. How many accidents took place on account of bursting of LP Gas cylinders and how many due to short-circuits? It is essential to have separate details of the jhuggi-jhonpris where fire broke out and where they were set ablaze deliberately. The Government has not given a reply as to the amount of ex-gratia payment given to those who suffered losses. He has stated that the Government is extending ex-gratia payment where-ever it is necessary. How much compensation has been paid to the thirteen person who were killed and to those eighteen persons who were injured, separately?

SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMAD SAYEED: He has asked several questions. Previously when fire broke out in jhuggi jhonpris Rs. 250/- were given as compensation but this amount has now been enhanced to Rs. 250/- were given as compensation but this amount has now been enhanced to Rs. 500/- wherever there was loss e.g. in Sadar Bazar and in other areas.....

(Interruptions)

SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMAD SAYEED: I do not have separate figures of the jhuggi jhoparis, I shall collect them and inform you.

SHRIMATI JAYWANTI NAVINCHANDRA MEHTA: These are the incidents of Delhi and the Government do not have full information even about these incident. It is not a reply to say that information will be collected. How much money has been given to those injured and how much to the next of kin of those killed and what measures have been adopted to check such incidents in future?

MR. SPEAKER: He will explain it.

SHRI J.P. AGARWAL (Chandni Chowk): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I had raised this issue earlier also that the people living in jhuggis do not get any help from the Delhi Administration despite their repeated requests in this regard. No matter what report is sent to you by the Administration, the fact is that no money has been given to the persons whose JHUGGIS had burnt as a result of which they have not been able to construct their shelters. You will not get any report in this regard. Another issue is that the shopkeepers of Sadar Bazar, whose shops got burnt had in past requested the insurance company to insure their shops but the company refused to do that. I had raised this issue earlier also. There are several issues like this due to which there is much resentment among the people. I would like to know from the hon. Minister about the decision taken by the Government on the issues which I had raised earlier. I had raised the following questions:—

- (a) Would the hon. Minister ask the Insurance Company to insure the shops of Sadar Bazar?
- (b) Whether any money was given to the people living in Juggies
- (c) Whether any custom-duty has been imposed on fire fighting equipments and if so, there should be no custom duty on such equipments as there are life saving equipments.

SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMAD SAYEED: Total relief given so far amount to Rs. forty three lakhs eighty seven thousand, two

hundred and fifty. Rs. one lakh and thirty thousands were given to the next of the kin of the deceased while those who were injured, were given relief ranging from Rs. five hundred to Rs. three thousand each. Details are given below:

Samaipur	28000/-
Wazirpur	3,54,000/-
Rohini	1,30,000/-
Shantivan	10,77,000/-
Sahbad	5500/-
Shahdara	1,25,000/-
Patelnagar	8000/-
Kirtinagar	72,500/-
Wazirpur	40,000/-
Adarshnagar	5,93,500/-
Geeta Colony	1,25,000/-
Motiyakhan	7,97,500/-
Shahbad	6,66,500/-
Badli	1,13,000/-
Silampur	34,000/-
Jahangirpuri	3,27,500/-

SHRI J.P. AGARWAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, please get me a copy of these details. The details of the total number of beneficiaries and the amount given to each individual should be given.

MR. SPEAKER: He has already given the details.

SHRI KALKA DAS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there has been a series of fire-incidents in Delhi the details of which have been given by the Hon'ble Home Minister just now. In this

connection I would like to tell something about Motia Khan area my constituency. A disastrous fire had broken out there, and the hon. Minister of Urban Development accompanied by the Minister of State of Home Affairs had visited the site, I would like to know the total number of persons affected in that fire-incident. I had a personal talk with the hon.. Lieutenant Governor in this connection. As per my information nine children and two women were burnt to death in this fire-incident. I had urged him for ordering a CBI enquiry into the incident besides giving rupees one lakh to the next of the kin of the dead and rupees twenty thousand to each of the affected person. So I would like to know the details of relief given to the victims of fire.

SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMAD SAYEED: I have already laid the details on the table of the House (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

PROF. SAVITHRI LAKSHMANAN: Please allow me to speak Sir. In my residence also, there was a fire accident. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I did not know that. I will call you.

[*Translation*]

SHRI KALKA DAS: It has been stated by the Hon'ble Minister that the details have since been laid on the table of the House. But here I would like to know whether or not my demand to give rupees one lakh to the next of the kin of the deceased and twenty thousands to each affected person has been conceded.

SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMAD SAYEED: We will consider his suggestion.

[*English*]

PROF. SAVITHRI LAKSHMANAN: Sir, I am residing in Flat No. 139 of South Avenue. On 20th May, around 10.45 PM, there was a fire in the bathroom of my residence

due to short circuit. Colleagues from my own State, namely, Prof. K.V. Thomas Mr. Basheer, Mr. P.A. Antony and others came to my help to put out the fire, even before the CPWD people arrived. Now, my question is whether or not the government will issue orders to revamp all the flats without waiting for our requests as fire may not restrict itself to only one flat. Will you please issue order in this regard?

SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMAD SAYEED: There are clear directions that in respect of high-rise buildings, certain procedures have to be followed, certain directives have to be followed, and what are the fire preventive measures which have to be taken. But in some buildings, those measures are not being taken. We are very serious about it. We are taking action against them. Even certain Government buildings have no proper fire preventive measures.

The suggestion of the hon. Member is with regard to Government buildings. Generally, wherever Government buildings are there, it is ensured that fire preventive measures are taken. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: No interruptions please. Please sit down.

[*Translation*]

SHRI HARI KEWAL PRASAD: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the details laid on the table of the House by the hon. Minister, it is mentioned that certain amounts as reliefs have been given to the persons whose Jhuggis were gutted in the said fire incident. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the amounts said to have been paid to the victims were actually paid to them. And further, will he order an enquiry into those cases where affected persons are yet to be paid this amount to find out the reasons therefore. Secondly, I would like to know whether he will give necessary directions to the administration to rehabilitate those jhuggi dwellers who have been rendered homeless as a result of this fire.

MR. SPEAKER: This question has al-

ready been replied by the hon. Minister, perhaps, you did not listen to him properly.

SHRI HARI KEWAL PRASAD: My question is whether the hon. Minister will order an enquiry into those cases where no amount has so far been paid to the affected persons. They have not been paid any amount by any official.

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down, the hon. Minister is answering.

SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMAD SAYEED: The Government has given rupees 500 to each person whose Jhuggis was burnt, we have not received any complaint regarding non-payment of relief to any affected person. The hon. Member may bring such instance, if any, to our notice. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Bimalji, you please sit down. I shall allow you to speak at the appropriate time.

[*English*]

Krishi Vigyan Kendras

*964. **SHRIBALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL:** Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision to open Krishi Vigyan Kendras in all the districts in the country;

(b) if so, when these are likely to be established; and

(c) the reasons for delay in this regard?

[*Translation*]

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI DEVI LAL): (a) to (c). The policy of the Government is to open Krishi Vigyan Kendras in various districts of the country as per the availability of funds.

SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL: Mr. Speaker Sir, we are not sure about the