

to carry out their plans than how can we succeed in combating terrorism in the country? A thorough investigation has to be made into this matter to find out who are the people in the higher echelons of the government who are conniving with the militants, giving them hideouts and allowing the to stay free and being at large in the country. The leader of the House is here. I draw his pointed attention to this matter and I request him to come out with an elaborate statement in the House on this subject as it concerns the security and integrity of the country.

[*Translation*]

SHRIDIGVIJAYASINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, seven years back in the night of December 2 and 3, poisonous gas from Union Carbide Factory at Bhopal leaked causing deaths of more than two thousand persons and injuries to thousands of others. Though, the Supreme Court has pronounced its verdict for granting compensation to the victims, yet the amount of the compensation is yet to be decided at the district level in Bhopal and it is causing too much delay. On account of this, the deserving victims are yet to get the amount of compensation.

12.25 hrs

[Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the other point is that even after 7 years our medical experts are yet to identify that poisonous gas and suggest its actual line of treatment. Without it, the injured victims are suffering. Since their line of treatment is not specified, they undergo great sufferings.

On this occasion, I express my anguish for all who became victims of the tragedy and request the administration to request the Indian Council of Medical Research to find out the actual medical line of treatment. I would like to request the Minister of law to

take a decision for providing compensation to the victims immediately. This is a very important issue today.

[*English*]

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR: In support of what hon. Member has said, I would like to emphasize that the gas pollution is still continuing. People are dying and the actual compensation that is due to the people is not yet received by the bereaved people. That is the reason why such proposals have been coming up in the House time and again. We strongly support this proposal and expect that the Government will act immediately on this issue.

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARYA (Jadavpur): I want to draw the attention of the House to the international pressure under which the Indian Patents Act is at the moment. In answer to the Unstarred question No. 300, it had been pointed out by the Government that during the recent visit of Mrs. Carla Hills on the issue of patents no new point was raised and the two sides agreed to let the matter rest for the present. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Such an important issue is being raised and no Minister is paying attention. Will the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs listen?

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARYA: Now, Since that time, however, the Indo-US Joint Business Council completed its deliberations on November 20th and they recommended that India should sign the Paris Convention. I want to know how this recommendation is arrived at if no new point relating to patents Act had been raised at the meeting with Mrs. Carla Hills. If India signs the Paris Convention then the Indian patents Act would have to go back to the pre-1970 period and the patent then will be not on the product alone, but on the process as well.

Now the case stands so that after five to seven years medicine for instance can be manufactured in this country by using indigenous technology. If the Patents Act is revised, then this right would be taken away. Also, if a charge is brought against an Indian manufacturer for infringing the Patents Act, then the onus of proof would be on the person against whom the charge is being brought. Moreover, patents so as to tally with the so-called international standards. Because there is in fact no such international standard it is going to be raised to 20 years. This, Sir, we feel would toll the death-knell for the indigenous manufacture of drugs. Not only that, many life-saving drugs would then have to be imported and consequently they would be priced out of the reach of the ordinary people. Lasix for instance, a popular diuretic, would cost 23 times more. Chemotherapy for cancer would cost Rs.5 lakhs a year.

In view of this, the recommendation of the Joint Business Council as causing grave concern. We must be sure that the government does not succumb to this pressure that is put upon it by the international sources. We want a clear indication of what the government wants to do with regard to the Indian Patents Act. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY (Katwa): I want to add some thing to it.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is it connected with this matter?

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY: Yes. It is in the interest of the country and some other important issues are involved on the aspect of drugs and pharmaceuticals, in relation to Patent Laws. The United States are pressuring our country to accept some thing which is detrimental to our agriculture. They are demanding that we have to accept

the Plant weeder's Right. That means, the kind of Green Revolution that has taken place in our country, on the basis of high yielding variety of seeds, will be totally in jeopardy, and our agricultural development will be at stake. They are demanding patent on living material. We have never accepted that so far. They want us to do away with the kind of protection we give to our agriculture, the kind of subsidy we give and the kind of specific commodity variety protection we give and all that. They are demanding this from our country, so that they are in a position to undermine our agriculture and dump their foodgrains in our country. This is a very serious matter and if agriculture is under destruction, then our industrial development will also be in jeopardy. In this situation, this House must express its feeling. Before signing any convention during the Uruguay Round of Talks, the government must come to this House and spell out concretely as to what they are going to do. And after signing it, it should say what they have signed. That must be brought before this House and they should get it ratified. I do not know, in international conventions, there may be something to sign about. But the point is this that they must tell this House and the people of this country as to what they are going to sign and after signing, whatever they have signed should be brought to this House and get it ratified. This is a very serious matter.

SHRI TARIT BATAN TOPDAR: Without referring it to this House, they must not sign any single paper on this issue.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: This is a matter of serious concern and it is a matter of national concern. The issue is being debated outside, but till now, there has been no official pronouncement as to what is the approach of the Government in this regard.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATERJEE: Everything is done behind the back of this House.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: These days we are trying to sort out our economic problems also by negotiating with the IMF, etc. Very often, issues of this kind are also linked up with them. This may be right or this may be wrong, I do not know. So, these misgivings can be set at rest only by sharing with the House. the thinking of the Government in this regard. So far as I feel, this is a matter which should not in any way be linked up with our economic problems. It should be decided on its own. If there are certain lobbies which are interested in forcing us to sign this particular document, we should stay away from it. Therefore, my demand would be this. Let the Government share with the House as to what is its thinking in this regard before going to participate in that. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI LOKANATH CHOUDHURY: Sir, what about the issue raised by Shrimati Malini Bhattacharya and what is the reaction of the Government? The Government must say something. The Opposition is already unanimous on this point. Whatever the Government does, they must bring it to the House. The House should know what the government is thinking on this point.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Why the leader of the House is so unresponsive today? (*Interruptions*)

SHRI LOKNATH CHOUDHURY (Jagatsinghpur): The silence of the Government only shows that they have already agreed to this. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI HARADHAN ROY (Asansol): Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the government to the serious situation arising out of the decision of the Government to privatise or close down some of the public sector units on the plea that they are sick. Over the years, since nationalisation, most of these public sector units were taken over

from the private sector for modernisation, diversification and expansion, but nothing has been done. In West Bengal, Sen-Raleigh - now Cycle Corporation of India - MAMC, BOGL, seven refractory units under Burn Standard, and fertiliser units are on the verge of closure. IISCO's future is uncertain. The modernisation programme is yet to come from the Government's side. Even Coal India is facing a bleak future. While private sector is demanding coal-bearing land, privatisation of power generation is promoting privatisation of coal mines. ECL has already notified closure of 32 mines in Raniganj.

I would request the Government to give up this privatisation and closure move and try to improve the functioning of the public sector units by modernisation, expansion, diversification, etc. It is high time that the Government should abandon the privatisation and closure more. Otherwise, workers of the closed public sector units will resist the Government's move and the situation will be worse. The Government must have realised the gravity of the situation after the 29th November, one-day industrial strike. (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I have called the name of Shri Anna Joshi, Let him speak.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI ANNA JOSHI (Pune): Sir, Maharashtra State has been facing severe drought condition this year. The Government has fixed a quota of rice to be levied on the rice-mill owners. It is increasingly becoming difficult to fulfil the stipulated quota. Government authorities and revenue officials are pressing hard to extract levy from rice-mill owners. Drought has already brought down the yields and paddy cultivation which is limited only to three or four districts of Konkan and Bhandara in Vidarbha. Further, the price extended by Government for such levy is half that of market price.