

SHIR AJIT P.K. JOGI: This question does not relate to women (*Interruptions*) This question is specifically about the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (*Interruptions*)

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: So what? Are there no women in Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes? .Why is it that you don't ask about women in the same breath?

SHIR AJIT P.K. JOGI: There are both men and women in in Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (*Interruptions*)

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Yes, we know (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Have you got any more supplementaries? Please, let us not have this kind of a discussion.

SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI: I only wish to thank the hon. Prime Minister. We have full confidence in him and my request is, please consider these six judgments which I have stated and then issue a revised Memo based on that.

SHRI IK. GUJRAL: So far as the Memo is concerned, I am not aware of the Memo. I will look into it. That is number one. Number two, I repeat what I said, that the commitment made in the Constitution will be adhered to. Thirdly, the present situation of reservation and reservation in promotion will continue. A date was fixed at that time, I remember, and before that we will do the needful.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Hanumanthappa. No supplementary? I shall go to the next question.

*464[TAe questioner (*Shri S.S. Ahluwalia*) was absent, for answer vide col *infra*.]

Death of Haj Pilgrims Due to Security Lapses

*465 SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD:

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:†

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the revelation made by the Indian Consul General in Saudi Arabia that Indian victims of fire at Mina could have escaped but their Saudi guides locked them in their compounds, instead of letting them flee to safety;

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the complaints against the goodwill mission to the Haj; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) and (b) Government are aware of the reports in the press attributing certain remarks to the Consul General of India in Jeddah. Government have examined the matter carefully and it was found that these are based on reports by a few of the Indian pilgrims on the conduct of an individual gate keeper, and that no broad generalisation about the tragedy can be drawn on this basis. Government have noted that Saudi Arabian authorities have ordered an enquiry into the accident.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP: Sir, this question was considered yesterday and a detailed discussion on this was held. I do not think there are any further queries arising out of this.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Sir, I am only asking him and I will ask him

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Gurudas das Gupta.

always. Let the privilege be enjoyed by everybody and not by women alone.

Sir, the issue is, it is one of the rarest human disasters that have taken place and in this human disaster a large number of victims belong to this country. Therefore, my first supplementary will also be to the Prime Minister as to what Government is going to do, relying on their own information, to find out what actually had happened that led to this disaster and what they are going to suggest because such pilgrimage shall take place again next year and there will be inflow, a huge inflow of people from different areas. Therefore, it is not a question of it being an internal problem of Saudi Arabia. It is an annual international event. Therefore, what is the safeguard that the Government would suggest to Saudi Arabia in order to strengthen its own agencies so that such disasters do not take place, without leaving the matter to Saudi Arabia only.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): Sir, I might repeat what I have already said in public. The Government of India and the people of India feel very sad about this accident and people have suffered a lot. The Government of India also has done its best to come to their relief and provide some relief to those who have suffered. I had also sent a special delegation now comprising Members of Parliament as well to look into this. They have come back and told us that they met all the victims who are still in the hospitals; some have come back and have expressed satisfaction regarding the arrangements made by the Saudi Arabian Government. To say that Saudi Arabia was not doing its best is an unfortunate way of looking at things. Saudi Arabia is doing its best and Saudi Arabian Government is a competent Government. Therefore, all the arrangements that they had made for Haj pilgrims, I must say, are to our satisfaction. Incidents and accidents do happen. It is a very unfortunate one. I am sure that the Saudi Arabian

Government is also trying to see that it does not recur and I have faith in them.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Sir, that is not the issue. The issue is, it may be beyond their means. I have every reason to believe that Saudi Arabia will be doing its best but the means of the Government may be well beyond the requirement. Therefore, some sort of international help, international arrangement has to be made so that such an event does not take place in the future considering such inflow of manpower.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: Sir, I hope my hon. friend appreciates the sensitivity of the subject. It is a very sensitive subject and some hon. Members sitting in the House were at the time in Saudi Arabia itself. So they have come and told me that they did not see anything lacking on the part of Saudi Arabian Government itself. As far as the means of Saudi Arabia are concerned, let us not underestimate them. I think Saudi Arabia means are very wide and vast and I think they can take care of it. Naturally, it is an annual Haj pilgrimage and a large number of people go from our country. I am under the impression that approximately two million people go there every year and arrangements are made for them. And this unfortunate accident did take place. The victims were not only from India. The victims were from Pakistan, the victims were from Philippines. I do not want to say as to who suffered more. Every human being who suffered has our sympathy.

SHRI K. RAHAMAN KHAN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the primary responsibility for looking after the Hajjis' welfare is entrusted to the Central Haj Committee which is a statutory body. I would like to know the role of the Haj Committee in the entire episode. I would also like to know whether it has submitted any report to the Government since it has the responsibility for sending the pilgrims.

Sir, the Haj Committee was constituted under an Act which was enacted some 40

years ago when Hajis used to go only by ships. Today the entire Haj Committee is a Maharashtra Haj Committee because all used to go from there. Now there is a need to modify the Haj Act so that all these contingencies which are going to arise when large numbers of pilgrims visit the place could be taken care of. The Government has committed itself in this House to change the Wakf Act and to revamp the Haj administration. I would like to know from the Prime Minister whether there is any move to revamp the entire Haj administration and to modify the Haj Act.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: Sir, in my capacity as Foreign Minister, I have been dealing with the subject. I know there is an opinion in this country and in this House that the law needs to be modified. I have been rather slow about it and slow deliberately because I think it is a religious matter. Therefore, I want to be very cautious about it. We are moving cautiously and whatever modifications are called for, I would like to take the hon. Members into confidence before any move is made in this regard.

श्री वसीम अहमद: सभापति महोदय, हज पर कल भी यहां तफसील से डिस्कशन हुआ था और आज फिर बात आई है। हज पर जाने वाले लोगों में, खास तौर से हिंदुस्तानी लोगों में 95 परसेंट लोग ऐसे होते हैं जो सालों तक पैसा जोड़कर हज के लिए जाते हैं। इसमें कोई शक नहीं है कि हज के लिए जाते समय वे लोग पहली बार हवाई जहाज पर सफर करते हैं और इससे पहले उन्होंने ट्रेन तक नहीं देखी होती है। आज सवाल यह नहीं है कि गलती किसकी है। आज सवाल यह है कि वहां पर सुरक्षा के पर्याप्त इंतजाम होना चाहिए। हमारे जो हाजी वहां पर जाते हैं, उनको मालूम नहीं होता है कि उनको किन चीजों का इस्तेमाल करना चाहिए और किन चीजों का इस्तेमाल नहीं करना चाहिए।

सभापति महोदय, इस हादसे की सबसे बड़ी बदकिस्मती यह है कि हुकूमतें चक्कर में आ रही हैं। न सऊदी गवर्नमेंट की ऐसी कोई मंशा रही होगी और न हमारी गवर्नमेंट की रही होगी कि हाजियों को कोई परेशानी हो और हमारे हाजी इतनी बड़ी तादाद में मारे जाएं। सिर्फ भारत के ही नहीं बल्कि पूरी दुनिया के लोग

हज के लिए वहाँ जाते हैं। जो हाजी पैसा जोड़कर वहाँ हज के लिए जाते हैं उनके लिए जरूरी इंतजामात करने के लिए एक कमेटी बननी चाहिए ताकि इस तरह के हादसे आईदा न हों।

सभापति महोदय, मैं रहमान साहब की बात से इत्तफाक करता हूँ कि हज कमेटी जो कई सालों से ऐलीगेशन का शिकार बनी हुई है, इस पर भी हमें गौर करना चाहिए और उसकी वर्किंग पर इक्वारी कमेटी बैठनी चाहिए ताकि ईमानदारी के साथ हज कमेटी अपना रोल प्ले कर सके और हमारी गवर्नमेंट उनका ऐसी हिदायत दे जिससे वह सही काम कर सकें।

सभापति महोदय, जब यह आग लगने का वाक्या हुआ था तो गुजराल साहब खुद हिंदुस्तान के अंदर सऊदी अरब के अधिकारियों के कांटेक्ट में थे और कोशिश कर रहे थे कि किसी तरह से रिलीफ का काम ठीक तरह से हो। उसके एक ज्वाइंट सेक्रेटरी जाकिर साहब वहां दिन रात लगे हुए थे और हमारे लोग भी लगे हुए थे ...**(व्यवधान)**...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude ...**(Interruptions)**... Let him conclude.

श्री वसीम अहमद: मैं यह पूछना चाहता हूँ कि क्या यह सरकार ऐसी कुछ कार्यवाही करना चाहती है ईमानदारी के साथ कि हाजियों को आईदा इन तमाम हादसों से बचाया जा सके और जो कमियां हमारे मेमबरान ने बताई हैं, उनकी डिटेल्ड स्टडी हो और फिर सरकार दोबारा इस हाऊस के अंदर स्टेटमेंट लेकर आए।

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: Sir, my hon. friend knows that the Government of India tries to do its best so far as the Hajis are concerned. We send officially approximately 70 or 80 to 100 doctors sometimes, from India so that they can be of assistance to those who suffer there. We also send approximately a hundred other officials who are always there to assist them. So, this assistance is there. Secondly, I would request the House to kindly keep in mind that the incident or the sad accident did not start in the India camp. The fire broke out in the neighbouring camp. It spread out to this side. Therefore, this is unfortunate. So far as the inquiry as to what should be done or should not be done is concerned,

I think in these religious matters the Government's intervention should be the least.

SHRI K.R. MALKANI: Sir, a titanic tragedy hit the pilgrims. The Consul General of India on the spot made a report which the Government in its wisdom did not accept. The Government then sent an official delegation of four, three of whom were MPs and one was an ex-MP. I am surprised why one ex-MP of Rajya Sabha was included and none of the sitting Members of the Rajya Sabha was included. Now they are supposed to have submitted a report. That report is yet to come before us.

My question is this. There was a goodwill delegation there. According to the hon. Prime Minister, it consisted of a hundred persons. The hon. Law Minister told us yesterday that it was only thirty. What is wrong with our arithmetic? The point is here were people who were there on the spot. Have they made any report or not? If they have, what is that report? If they haven't made any report, did the Government ask them for a report? And if it didn't why did it not? If Govt. could not go along with the Consul General, they should have asked these 30 or 100 people to say what they saw and heard themselves. What was the idea of sending this small belated delegation to do some kind of a command performance?

SHRI J.K. GUJRAL: Facts I must clarify. I never said 'a goodwill delegation of hundred people'. I was talking about the officials who are sent every year. This is different from the goodwill delegation. The goodwill delegation consists of Members of Parliament and also others. There were about thirty this year. Many MPs from the Lok Sabha could not go although they were members of the delegation. Because of developments here they wanted to stay back. I think the number was less than 30. I don't recall the exact number as to how many people did go. They have also given us their.

उपयोग न किए गए विदेशी ऋण

*466. श्री सुन्दर सिंह भंडारी: क्या वित्त मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) अंतर्राष्ट्रीय एजेंसियों से प्राप्त उन ऋणों का ब्यौरा क्या है जिनका उपयोग 31 मार्च, 1996 तक नहीं हो पाया है तथा कौन कौन से राज्य तथा केन्द्रीय मंत्रालय/विभाग ऋणों का उपयोग नहीं कर पाए.

(ख) इसके क्या कारण थे, और

(ग) इन ऋणों के समुचित उपयोग को सुनीक्षित करने के लिए क्या कदम उठाए जा रहे हैं?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Information is given in the Annexure.

[See Appendix 180, Annexure No. 73.]

(b) and (c) Foreign loans are largely project tied and therefore, the utilisation of the sanctioned loan for any project is spread over the project implementation period. As a result, there would be unutilised loans at any point of time, reflecting loans in pipeline, which will be absorbed as project implementation takes place.

However, slower than expected utilisation of foreign loans is due to fund constraints, procurement and contracting delays, delays in land acquisition and other project specific issues.

Some of the steps taken by the Government to improve aid utilisation are, ensuring adequate provisioning for externally aided projects, release of ACA as 100% additionally, advance release of ACA to the States, standardisation of bidding documents and streamlining of procurement procedures, disintermediating on flow of external aid to Central PSUs, Portfolio Rationalisation and setting up of Project Management Unit in Department of Economic Affairs.

श्री सुन्दर सिंह भंडारी: श्रीमान, इस सवाल में कुछ स्टैप्स का मेंशन किया गया है जिससे यूटिलाइजेशन