

**Concern over the imposition of 'Jaziya' like tax on the Sikhs and
the Hindus in Pakistan**

SARDAR TARLOCHAN SINGH (Haryana): Sir, it is a matter of regret to mention here that the Government of India has not raised any objection when a tax was imposed on Sikhs and Hindus who were living peacefully for centuries in the North of Pakistan. In the present world when people are striving for communal harmony and inter-faith relations, one community is imposing a tax on the people who don't believe in their faith and the tax is collected forcibly. We were taught in the schools that some hundred years back even in India Jazia, a tax by the ruling Government, was imposed, because of the different religious beliefs, on the residents of other community, which remained prevalent for a long time.

The Government of India should raise this issue in the United Nations and also through our Embassies apprise every country about this harsh action and the treatment given to Sikhs and Hindus in Pakistan and effort should be made that the Pakistan Government should give the entire money collected from these families back to them. It is further a matter of concern that till today the Government of India has not sent any senior official to Pakistan to meet the unfortunate victims who are living as refugees. No aid has been sent by India to them. Thank you.

Concern over increasing number of dowry deaths in the country

SHRIMATI T. RATNA BAI (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to speak about the dowry deaths in this august House. Sir, it is a matter of great concern that the dowry deaths are increasing day by day in the country. Hundreds of innocent women are being burnt to death. Really, it is an uncivilized act. Being a woman, I know the sufferings of such victims.

Sir, in our country, on the one hand, people regard women as a *devi*; on the other hand, they burn them alive. This is against the norms of civilised society. It is barbaric. Sir, one should not show mercy to those accused of burning women to death over dowry demands. They should be hanged till death. Then only, the society will fear to do an unlawful activity against women. This is the immediate need of the hour to save our women and their children from such dowry deaths.

Sir, I also request the Government to provide immediate financial relief to the children of such women who die in dowry related deaths by changing the law.

Demand to restart the earlier system of voting by using ballot papers in the country

SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I would like to urge upon the Government to take steps to revert to ballot paper for conducting public elections, since the authenticity of Electronic Voting Machine is questionable among the public. Our country has nearly above five thousand villages and majority of the people do not have access to knowledge about electronic

voting machines. Even election officers appointed by the Government for the election duty do not have adequate knowledge about this machine. In cases where problems occur in the voting machine, the concerned polling officers at the polling booth face severe difficulties to rectify the problem, which also obstructs the normal polling.

Such a situation paves way for many anti-social elements to indulge in malpractices, which certainly could not be proved. Further, even the voter does not know as to whom he has voted for. It is not a healthy thing for our country, which is the largest democratic country in the world. If this situation continues in every public election, I can certainly say that the people of this democratic country may lose their confidence in the largest democratic system in the coming years. Many developed countries have already reverted back to ballot paper after the manipulations in electronic voting machines were detected.

Therefore, I urge upon the Government, through you, Sir, to take necessary action to revert back to the earlier ballot system in the coming public elections.

**Concern over the problems being faced by people living in the border areas
due to the barbed fencing**

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN (West Bengal): Sir, in order to safeguard the people of their livelihood who are living in the periphery of the border area of our country, barbed fencing was erected in different districts of West Bengal, namely, Nadia Murshidabad, West Dinapur, etc., to protect from the influx of comedowns from the other country.

Although it is far from the zero point across the border, plenty of cultivable land owned by the farmers belong to that area. They are crossing the border to cultivate different types of crops in their own land. But they are now facing immense problems to cross the fencing for cultivation of their land. They are also experiencing hurdles to cross the entry point due to unnecessary harassment and unnecessary checking. In many places our common people are not in a position to have access so that they can cultivate their own farmland. But, panic in the border area is becoming worse leading to mounting problems.

A notice on behalf of the Border Security Force was hung up and a public meeting was convened. In the said meeting, the Border Security Force authorities appealed to the common people of the area and directed the people to cooperate so that they can cultivate the crops in their own land, but the height of the crop should not be more than 3 feet. Under the circumstances, the livelihood of the local farmers is at stake which may lead to other complications affecting the livelihood of the farmers community.

In view of the situation stated above, I would request the Government to take proper and just action so that the farmers and common people of our country can cultivate their own land and produce their livelihood.