

would do everything to avoid human errors.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 144.

Fire in Siddhartha Hotel

*144. SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR:†
SHRI KAILASH PATI
MISHRA:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether an inquiry commission was appointed to go into the causes of and to suggest remedial measures about the devastating fire in Siddhartha Hotel in New Delhi on 23rd January last;

(b) what are its findings and recommendations and whether the report is proposed to be laid on the Table of the House;

(c) number of claims filed, accepted and date of payments thereof;

(d) criteria and procedure of determining the claim amount; and

(e) names of persons whose claims have not been paid and reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The report of the Inquiry Commission is awaited from the Delhi Administration. The report together with the Memorandum of Action taken will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) to (e) It is a matter between the private parties. The concerned parties have to file claims in civil courts and the courts will decide the quantum of compensation in each individual case.

श्री अश्वनी कुमार : माननीय सभापति महोदय, मैं मंत्री जी का आभारी हूँ कि उन्होंने आशवासन दिया है कि

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Ashwani Kumar.

यह रिपोर्ट सदन के पटल पर रखी जायेगी। आजकल कई रिपोर्टों को नहीं भी रखा जाता। इसके काज के बारे में, इसकी समस्याओं के बारे में उसी समय विचार होना चाहिए जब रिपोर्ट आ जाए। दूसरा विषय आज क्लेम का है। इस और आपका ध्यान आकर्षित करना चाहता हूँ। रेलवे एक्सीडेंट होता है रेलवे क्लेम कुछ देती है 10, 20, 30 हजार देती है। एयर एक्सीडेंट होता है उसमें भी कुछ क्लेम दिया जाता है। बहुत सी दुर्घटनाएँ सड़क पर होती हैं। बहुत से लोग मारे जाते हैं। उनके क्लेम के लिए कोर्ट्स में जाना पड़ता है। इश्योरेंस कम्पनी में जाना पड़ता है। वर्षों तक उसके पीछे दौड़ना पड़ता है।

अभी अपने देश में पिछले दिनों एक बहुत बड़ी दुर्घटना भोपाल में हुई। दो साल के लगभग बीत गये। किसी भी समस्या का निदान नहीं हुआ। इन दुर्भाग्यशाली लोगों को कहाँ से क्लेम मिलेगा, कौन क्लेम देगा पता नहीं। न सरकार न यूनिशन कार्बोइड से देने का फैसला हुआ है। हजारों परिवार टकटकी लगाये बैठे हैं। बहुत से लोग बिना सहायता के मरते जा रहे हैं।

■ इसी प्रकार सिद्धार्थ होटल की दुर्घटना हुई। 37 लोग मारे गये हैं। आपका कहना है कि अपना पर्सनल क्लेम फाइल करें। एक क्लेम फाइल किया गया है 50 लाख का, दूसरा किया जायेगा 100 लाख का और तीसरा किया जायेगा 10 लाख का। जैसी जिस की रसियत होगी वह क्लेम फाइल करेगा। इस प्रकार से अनावश्यक समय लगता चला जायेगा। इससे पता नहीं चलेगा कि मरने वालों के परिवारों को कब सहायता मिलेगी कब नहीं। आपके अपने कानून की व्यवस्था है उसमें कितना खर्चा होगा, इन सारी चीजों को देखते हुए मैं मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहूँगा कि ऐसी भ्रंशण दुर्घटना के लिए क्या सरकार कोई बोर्ड

या पार्टी बन कर उनको कम्प्लेसेशन तथा करने की कोई व्यवस्था करेगी जिस में सब लोग क्लेम फाइल कर सकें और उस में प्राइवेट पार्टी को बुलाया जाए, इश्योरेंस कम्पनी को बुलाया जा सके। एक सरकार का ट्राईब्यूनल हो जो इनके क्लेम पर विचार कर सके क्या ऐसा कोई विचार सरकार सोच रही है ?

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI:

I have already said that the report of the Inquiry Commission will be laid on the Table of the House and even the memorandum of action also will be laid on the Table of the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member wants to know whether you will appoint any separate commission or court or any such body which can dispose of these claims.

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI:

So far as airline accidents are concerned or so far as railway accidents are concerned, the House knows they are Government undertakings and, therefore, we are bound to frame rules and pay compensation. But here it is a big five-star hotel. We cannot compare the tragedy of Bhopal with the Siddhartha Hotel accident. Here in the hotel rich people were living whereas it was poor people involved at Bhopal. Therefore, we cannot compare this hotel accident with Bhopal case or airline accidents. However, we do share the anxiety of the honourable Member, Government do share the anxiety of the honourable. This is a tragic incident. Therefore, the report of the Inquiry Commission will be laid on the Table of the House. We have asked Delhi Administration to see how these compensation claims can be considered by one court so that people may not have to run here and there. We have all sympathy and we are considering the sentiments expressed by the hon'ble Member.

श्री अश्विनी कुमार : माननीय समा-
पति जी, मैंने रिपोर्ट के बारे में कहा
कि सरकार इसको रख रही है। मेरा

सोधा सा प्रश्न है। एक समस्या खड़ी हुई है भोपाल के अन्दर की, सिद्धार्थ होटल की और दिल्ली में दूसरा दुर्घटनाएं होती हैं, यहाँ दिल्ली में, बम्बई में 20 मंजिले, 30 मंजिले, 40 मंजिले बिल्डिंगें हैं जिनमें किसी दिन भी आग लग सकती है उनको कोआपरेटिव सोसाइटी, प्राइवेट सेक्टर और गवर्नमेंट सेक्टर को, तीनों सेक्टर को देश में बिल्डिंगें बनने वाली हैं। क्या सरकार जैसे इंडियन एयर लाइन्स और रेलवे वाले क्लेम देने की व्यवस्था करते हैं वैसे ही दूसरी दुर्घटनाओं में मरने वालों के लिए कोई व्यवस्था करेगी ? चाहे गरीब हो या अमीर हो सब के लिए एक ही व्यवस्था होना चाहिए। जो मर रहे हैं उनके वंशज कैसे क्लेम प्राप्त करेंगे यह एक महत्वपूर्ण प्रश्न है। क्या सरकार विचार करेगी एक ट्राईब्यूनल या बोर्ड बनाया जाए जहाँ जैसे होटल ट्रैजेडी घोषित की जाए एक महत्वपूर्ण ट्रैजेडी घोषित की जाए उसके सारे केसेज उसमें जाए और एक सीमित समय में उनका निर्धारण किया जाए ?

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI:

This is the anxiety which the honourable Member is expressing. We share this anxiety. We have to think whether all accidents in this country have to be covered by one kind of a regulation, one kind of a Bill. And, Sir, we have to consider whether all the accidents should be included in that. When accidents occur either in Government buildings or in places like Bhopal, we have to take them into consideration and we take them into consideration and we are giving all sympathy and help to the people.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Kailashpati Mishra. Not here. Yes, Mr. Vishwa Bhandu Gupta.

SHRI VISHWA BANDHU GUPTA:

Sir, I would like to know whether the firemen who also take part in the operations to put out fires in tragedies like the one in the Siddhartha Hotel would be included in this and whether any compensation has been paid to them in this case and if they run into any accidents, whether they

would be included in this for any such thing.

SHRI BUTA SINGH: Sir, a Bill has been passed the day before yesterday in the Lok Sabha in which a very detailed scheme has been worked out for dealing with fire accidents in Delhi and this is also likely to come up in this House for discussion and all the points which the honourable Member has raised have been noted in that Bill and care is taken. Sir, the honourable Member was putting a supplementary question. The findings of this Inquiry Commission themselves will indicate the mode of compensation and all such arrangements to be made even if it happens in a private sector building.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Kadharsa.

SHRI M. KADHARSHA: Sir, ...

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: Sir, may I add something to what my senior colleague has said? Sir, we are giving Rs. 11 crores to the Delhi Administration and are trying to help even the firemen who are fighting and doing the work.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Very good. Yes, Mr. Kadharsa.

SHRI M. KADHARSHA: Sir, the proverb says that prevention is better than cure. But unfortunately, the Government has not taken and does not take any preventive measure. The Siddhartha Hotel fire accident is not the first incident of this nature. Even earlier, in 1963, there was a fire accident in the Gopala Towers in Rajendra Place in Delhi. Whenever there is an accident, the Government appoints a committee and, after some time, as the public memory is short, we all forget about it. It has been reported that even many Government buildings including the Vikas Minar, which is the tallest building in Delhi, and many other buildings of the Government hospitals in Delhi are prone to fire.

It has also been reported that in the case of many Government buildings, no "No Objection" Certificates have been obtained from the Fire Service authorities. I would like to know from the honourable Minister what action is going to be taken by the Government against those who violate the fire protection rules and how the system is going to be made more efficient.

SHRI BUTA SINGH: Sir, as I mentioned earlier, a very detailed Bill is coming to this House in which all the provisions which the honourable Member can also suggest something more if he wants.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Santosh.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Sir, I would like to know whether the Government has taken any specific, necessary steps, to see that similar problems and similar fire accidents are not there in any other hotel and, if so, what those steps are.

SHRI BUTA SINGH: Sir, after this incident, there was a survey made in Delhi and a series of meetings were held to review the position with regard to equipping the high-rise buildings in Delhi and to equip them with fire-fighting equipment, both in the Home Ministry and in the Delhi Administration. Of the two hundred and twenty high-rise buildings, which have been identified, some are going to be taken up for the necessary equipment to be installed. Also, Sir, the Delhi Fire Prevention and Fire Safety Bill which has been as I mentioned earlier, passed in the Lok Sabha makes provisions for making buildings of such heights as may be specified under the rules which store explosives, explosive substances and dangerously inflammable substances, have the necessary fire prevention and fire safety measures. Provision has also been made for the inspection of

building and premises by the nominated authorities appointed by the Chief Fire Officer for ascertaining the adequacy of prevention measures and fire safety measures required to be taken by the occupier or the owner of the building. The contravention of any of the provisions of the Bill will be punishable with imprisonment of a term which may extend up to six months or with a fine extending up to fifty thousand rupees or both...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I think you have said enough. I think this would be enough. Yes, Mr. Salve.

SHRI N. K. P. SALVE: Sir, it is heartening to hear that a comprehensive legislative measure is coming to take care of such accidents and the accident victims. But, Sir, confining my question to the accident that has taken place in the Siddhartha Hotel on the 23rd January last, may I ask the Minister whether, as the reports appeared in the Press that for want of technical and proper compliance with safety measures which are stipulated statutorily, the fire could not be brought under control. My question becomes important because at least in the 5-star hotels we prescribe safety measures which can tackle sufficiently such situations and which are almost fool-proof. If the reports are correct, Sir, may I know what action has been taken against the management?

SHRI BUTA SINGH: So far two people were arrested. But now the whole thing is the subject matter of inquiry. The inquiry report is available and it will be placed on the table of this House. The House will be apprised of the various steps taken. Sir, I may mention to this august House that out 220 buildings identified the number which suffers from the deficiency of equipment is 194. Therefore, we will have to take stringent measures against those who fail to equip the buildings with fire-fighting devices.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question. Mr. Gopalsamy.

Suspension of the officials of UPSC

*145. SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: †
SHRI K. GOPALAN:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number and designations of officials of the Union Public Service Commission who have been suspended during the last three years and the reasons therefor;

(b) whether Government propose to appoint a Committee to review the functioning of the UPSC; if not, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government propose to take immediate steps to screen officials of the UPSC to get rid of persons of doubtful integrity, if not, what are the reasons therefor; and

(d) what other steps are being taken to streamline the functioning of the UPSC?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM):

(a) During the last three years 11 officials have been placed under suspension. Details as in Statement I are laid on the Table of the House. (See below)

(b) and (c) Government do not propose to appoint a Committee or to screen the officials. It is a matter for the UPSC, which is a Constitutional body, to decide.

(d) The steps recently taken by the UPSC as in Statement II are laid on the Table of the House.

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri V. Gopalsamy.