## Disaster Risks Associated with the State of Rajasthan

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### **ABSTRACT**

A disaster is a serious problem occurring over a short or long period of time that causes widespread human, material, economic or environmental loss which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources. The National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), Ministry of Home Affairs (Government of India) is a centre of excellence and learning in the field of disaster management. It is a premier resource institution for human resource development, training, capacity building, applied research, implementation and dissemination of information and knowledge for holistic disaster management. The institute works towards the effective application of disaster risk mitigation and management in India as well as in the region by providing technical assistance for capacity building and developing disaster management systems and institutional framework in the sector. Some of the key areas in which the Institute is involved are: Training: Training programmes, training workshops, and training of trainers for officials at the national, state and district levels to prepare them to tackle natural disasters. Research: Issues, concerns and lacunae in management of disasters, Lessons learnt from past disasters and best practices in Disaster Management. This paper explains natural and man made disasters and risks in Rajasthan.

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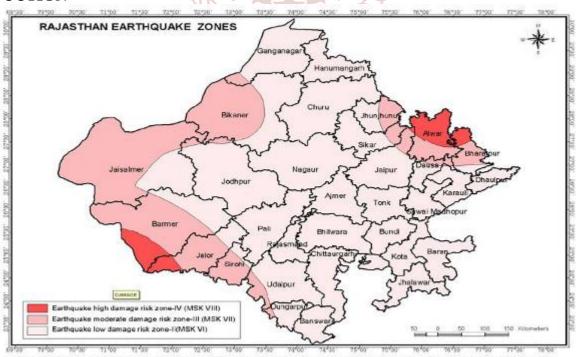
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KEYWORDS: disaster, management, risks, Rajasthan, India, environmental, national, government

### INTRODUCTION



Rajasthan earthquake risk zones

The HCM Rajasthan State Institute of Public Administration (HCMRIPA) is an apex level training institution of the Government of Rajasthan for training of civil servants.

HCMRIPA has now emerged as one of the front-ranking training establishments in India and abroad. HCMRIPA has a spread-out green campus, located in the heart of Jaipur City on the Jawaharlal Nehru Marg that links the Jaipur Airport with the City Centre. With a perfect picture of serenity, this is an ideal place for the pursuit of excellence. HCMRIPA has 4 Regional Training Centres located at Udaipur, Bikaner, Jodhpur and Kota. These centres conduct foundation training for the officers of state and subordinate services, refresher courses, workshops and seminars.[1,2]

Disasters contribute to social, economic, cultural and political disruption within vulnerable communities. The intrinsic relationship between disasters and development is manifested repeatedly in the human, material and economic loss from disaster events. Mainstreaming of Disaster Risk Reduction activities into the development process is imperative in our present context of risk. India is going through a process of rapid urbanization; with about 377 million people inhabiting the urban centres. The urban population is expected to grow exponentially in the next 30 years. The rapid, mostly haphazard growth has led to high risk situations and increased urban vulnerability. Ensuring urban resilience requires a participatory and inclusive approach to planning and development of cities. In recent times urban flooding has come up as a major disturbing element in urban scenario. The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) talk about mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development as a priority action which cannot be achieved without addressing urban changing disaster scenario. In this context, National Institute of Disaster Management, New Delhi and HCMRIPA, Jaipur Rajasthan jointly conducted a 3day online training programme on "Urban Risk Management" during October 4-6, 2021.

Natural disaster's impact on the community and development's sustainability are occurring in aggravated and multiplied size and intensity. Global concern for finding appropriate ecological indicators stems partly from our inability to interpret early warning signals of a major ecological change, given the complexity of ecological systems.



Heavy rains caused flood in Rajasthan in 2021

knowledge represents Traditional ecological experience acquired over thousands of years of direct human contact with the environment. Communities have evolved with the nature, its resources, its risks and natural processes as well which in certain conditions act as disasters due to their damaging impacts. Traditions of food, culture, spirituality, ethics and livelihoods have developed in the background of these natural or anthropogenic challenges in the background of interface between nature and human development, and thus, communities possess experience and knowledge to foresee, analysis, prepare for and face these challenges to sustain with resilience. India has a treasure of such indigenous and traditional knowledge of natural resource management and these can be extrapolated to understand the modern concepts of disaster risk management - in terms of early warning, preparedness, mitigation, response and relief as well. Rajasthan, the region historically known for drought disaster present icons showcasing the traditional wisdom. [3,4]

Facing abrupt patterns of rainfall and other natural calamities, Rajasthan is by and large safe from the effects of earthquakes. The latest seismic zone map released by the urban development ministry suggests that Rajasthan falls under zone II of seismic zone, which is low damage risk zone. Barmer, Jaisalmer and parts of Jodhpur and Alwar districts come under zone III, which indicates moderate damage risk. However, other parts of the state are safe from earthquakes as they fall under zone II, which is low damage risk zone.

"Rajasthan, due to its geographical condition, comes under the region which always had weak ground motion," said S S Mandal, director, seismology wing of IMD. The stability is also because of dense desert cover which has abundance of sand acting as a cushion. "During earthquakes, sand acts as a shock absorber in the state," said S C Mathur, head of department, geology, Jai Narayan Vyas University.



High risk of famines in Rajasthan

City planners are very upbeat over the technological interventions and feel that digitized maps will be useful in taking preventive steps.

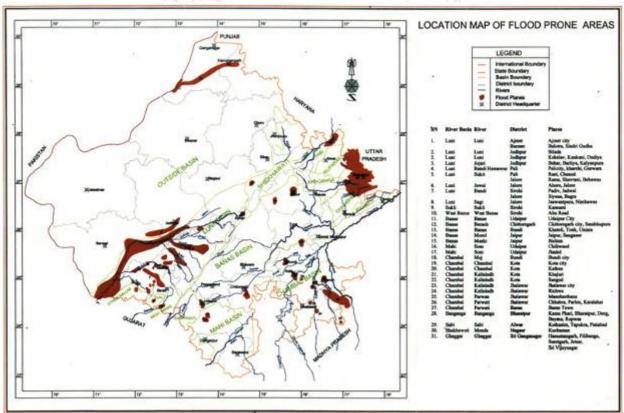
They claim that government and private builders who are involved in making residential complexes in vulnerable places will make full use of it.

"Regular updates will help in tracking down the impact of earthquakes and assist in planning in a better way."

Barmer, Jaislamer, Alwar, Jalore and Bharatpur are more prone to earthquakes. With mobile maps, residents at these places will be better informed about adopting quake-resistant techniques," said an official of disaster management and relief department.

### **Discussion**

A human stampede occurred on 30 September 2008, at the Chamunda Devi temple in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India, in which 224 people were killed and more than 425 injured. The 15th-century temple is dedicated to the goddess Chamunda Devi and is located within the premises of Mehrangarh Fort. About 25,000 Hindu pilgrims were visiting the temple to mark the first day of the nine-day-long Navratri, a major festival in Hinduism dedicated to the worship of Goddess Durga. The devotees scrambled towards the door the moment it opened, resulting in the destruction of the barricades. Many people were injured when they lost their footing on the slope approaching the temple. According to The Times of India, local reports suggest that a bomb blast in nearby Mehrangarh created panic among the pilgrims resulting in the stampede. However, the BBC News reported that a collapsing wall may have also caused the stampede. Some eyewitnesses told CNN-IBN that a rumour about a bomb being planted in the temple caused panic among pilgrims. Others said there was a scramble in the men's queue; some devotees slipped and soon there was a massive resultant stampede where a day of celebration turned into one of mourning.



Rajasthan flood risk zones

An eyewitness also said that the path leading to the temple was very narrow with no emergency exit routes. Indian Army doctors were called to assist the local authorities in the relief operation. Bharatiya Janata Party's Rajnath Singh assured speedy relief to the victims of the tragedy. Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje visited the site and ordered inquiry into the incident. Local authorities revealed that most of the dead were men as the queue for women was separate.

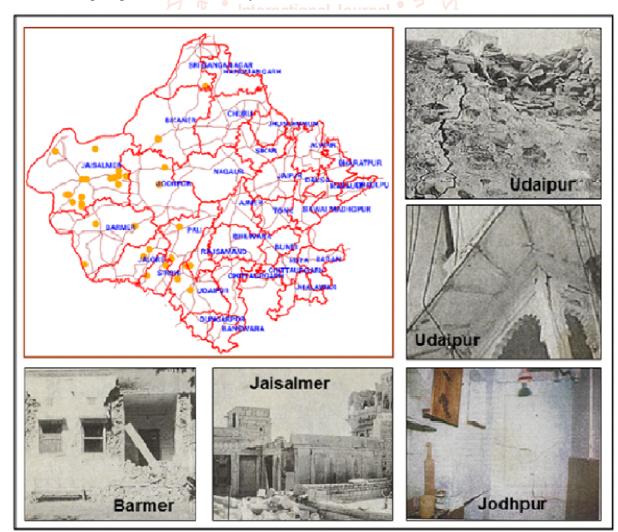


# Disaster Management, Relief & Civil Defence Department

## Government of Rajasthan

Uttarakhand Chief Minister B C Khanduri and Governor B L Joshi both expressed grief over the death of the pilgrims at the Chamunda Devi temple. A Raj Bhavan statement issued a condolence message saying Joshi conveyed his deepest sorrow to the bereaved families of the dead and said he would pray for the speedy recovery of those injured in the incident. Khanduri followed too in expressing grief over the accident. He also directed District Magistrates of all the 13 districts of his state to make special arrangements at religious places as they are expected to attract large crowds during the Navratra period. Jodhpur Muslims decided to keep the Eid celebrations next day a low-key affair. Local Muslim youth joined rescue teams, ferried victims to hospitals and donated blood.[5,6]

The Jaipur oil depot fire broke out on 29 October 2009 at 7:30 PM (IST) at the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) oil depot's giant tank holding 8,000 kilolitres (280,000 cu ft) of petrol, in Sitapura Industrial Area on the outskirts of Jaipur, Rajasthan, killing 12 people and injuring over 300. The blaze continued to rage out of control for over a week after it started and during the period half a million people were evacuated from the area. The oil depot is about 16 kilometres (9.9 mi) south of the city of Jaipur. The incident occurred when petrol was being transferred from the Indian Oil Corporation's oil depot to a pipeline. There were at least 40 IOC employees at the terminal (situated close to the Jaipur International Airport) when it caught fire with an explosion. The Met department recorded a tremor measuring 2.3 on the Richter scale around the time the first explosion at 7:36 pm which resulted in shattering of glass windows nearly 3 kilometres (1.9 mi) from the accident site.



Earthquake epicentral locations in Rajasthan

The fire was a major disaster in terms of deaths, injury, loss of business, property and man-days, displacement of people, environmental impact in Jaipur, the capital city of the Indian state of Rajasthan and a popular tourist destination. As per eyewitnesses having factories and hotels around Indian Oil's Sitapura (Jaipur) Oil Terminal they felt presence of petrol vapour in the atmosphere around 4:00 p.m. on 29 October 2009. Within the next few hours the concentration of petrol vapour intensified making it difficult to breathe. The Ayush Hotel in the vicinity of the terminal asked all its guests to vacate the hotel to avert any tragedy. Adjacent to the terminal wall was the workshop of Morani Motors (P) Limited whereas per eyewitnesses cars parked on the roof top were thrown up into the air to about 10 feet and 35 new Hyundai brand cars were completely destroyed. The police, civil administration and fire emergency services were oblivious to the situation developing in the Indian Oil Terminal.



Sitapura fire - manmade disaster

Around half past six the staff in the terminal who had contained the leak and flow of petrol panicked and reported the matter to nearby Sanganer Sadar Police Station. Within the next 30 minutes the local police chief and District Collector were on the spot along with the terminal's general manager, but with no plan to deal with the situation. The nearby industries, which were running second shifts, were cautioned to vacate the area. At 7:35 p.m. a huge ball of fire with loud explosion broke out engulfing the leaking petrol tank and other nearby petrol tanks with continuous fire with flames rising 30–35 m (98–115 ft) and visible from a 30 km (19 mi) radius. The traffic on adjacent National Highway No.12 was stopped leading to a 20 km (12 mi) long traffic jam. The Jaipur International Airport is just 5 km (3.1 mi) away from the accident site.

Both the army and experts from Mumbai were employed on 30 October 2009 to contain the fire in the Sitapura Industrial Area. The district administration disconnected electricity and evacuated nearby areas to limit the damage. The fire still raged on 31 October. By then, the accident had already claimed eleven lives and seriously injured more than 150 people. The District Administration and Indian Oil Corporation had no disaster management plan to deal with this kind of calamity. The local fire officers were ill-equipped to deal with fire accidents of this magnitude. They remained onlookers and no efforts were made to breach the terminal wall to get closer to kerosene and diesel tanks to cool them with water jets. The fire was blamed on non-observance of normal safety procedures. The depot fire raged for 11 days, killed 11 people in all and resulted in losses worth Rs 2.80 billion.[7,8]

The Disaster Management Act, 2005 envisages that each revenue District must have a Disaster Management Plan. While 31 revenue Districts of Rajasthan had placed the Disaster Management Plan on Rajasthan Government website Jaipur District did not have any Disaster Management Plan. A Disaster Management Plan for Jaipur District has been put on Internet on 17 November 2009 i.e. 20 days after the accident took place on 29 October 2009. In the meanwhile Jaipur suffered two more disasters when Swine Flu infected a number of school children prompting Government to order closure of schools, and derailment of a Train Mandore Express killing six persons and injuring more than 50 persons.

#### Results

A Legal Notice has been issued to Indian Oil Corporation for violating The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1974, The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, and The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. Air pollution across Jaipur was way above maximum permitted limits when the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) depot on the edge of the city was caught fire. It significant effect on the air in Delhi or Agra, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) reported. Almost 60,000 kilolitres (2,100,000 cu ft) of oil in 11 storage tanks went up in flames on the evening of 29 Oct and the blaze raged till 6 Nov. The Petroleum Minister of India Murli Deora had appointed a 5-member committee to investigate the causes of Fire and submit its report within 60 days. The Industries & Education Institutions in Sitapura Industrial Area have filed about 150

complaints with Sanganer Sadar police station about deaths, injury and loss of property due to negligence of Indian Oil Corporation Limited. Variation in stock of liquid petroleum products due to temperature variation, evaporation, handling (and also due to pilferage) result in what is known as *stock loss*. Percentage stock loss for every product for every depot is fixed based on historical operating data. Monitoring of stock loss is done on shift basis daily.

Abnormal variation in stock loss beyond permitted limit invites explanation and even disciplinary actions for the officers at the Depots and Terminals. The Competent Authorities for such charge sheeting for Depot level Officers for such lapses are Executive Director (Supplies) and Director (Marketing) who prefer to selectively issue charge sheets to defaulting officers to protect their favourites.

The Chief Judicial Magistrate, Jaipur City, Jaipur Mr. Mahaveer Swami ordered registering of a number of First Information Report (FIR) against Indian Oil Corporation Limited officers and Civil Administration for non-performance of statutory duty and negligence. The Director General of Police, Rajasthan to investigate against Mr. B. L. Soni, Inspector General of Police Jaipur Range I, Mr. Kuldeep Ranka, District Collector, Jaipur and Mr. Biju George Joseph, Superintendent of Police Jaipur (East) for commission of offences u/ss 120B, 166, 167, 201, 202, 203, 204, 217, 218, 221 IPC. The order was passed on 10 December 2009, a month after the fire got extinguished.[9,10]

- (1) Whoever is a party to a criminal conspiracy to commit an offence punishable with death, 2 [imprisonment for life] or rigorous imprisonment for a term of two years or upwards shall, where no express provision is made in this Code for the punishment of such a conspiracy, be punished in the same abetted such offence.
- (2) Whoever is a party to a criminal conspiracy other than a criminal conspiracy to commit an offence punishable as aforesaid shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term not exceeding six months, or with fine or with both. Whoever, being a public servant, knowingly disobeys any direction of the law as to the way in which he is to conduct himself as such public servant, intending to cause, or knowing it to be likely that he will, by such disobedience, cause injury to any person, shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine, or with both.

Section 304A: Causing death by negligence- Whoever causes the death of any person by doing any rash or negligent act not amounting to culpable homicide, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both.

Section 511: Punishment for attempting to commit offences punishable with imprisonment for life or other imprisonment-Whoever attempts to commit an offence punishable by this Code with 1[imprisonment for life] or imprisonment, or to cause such an offence to be committed, and in such attempts does any act towards the commission of the offence, shall, where no express provision is made by this Code for the punishment of such attempt, be punished with 2[imprisonment of any description provided for the offence, for a term which may extend to one-half of the imprisonment for life or, as the case may be, one-half of the longest term of imprisonment provided for that offence], or with such fine as is provided for the offence, or with both.

The Jaipur bombings were a series of nine synchronized bomb blasts that took place on 13 May 2008 within a span of fifteen minutes at locations in Jaipur, the capital city of the Indian state of Rajasthan, and a tourist destination. Official reports confirm 63 dead with 216 or more people injured. The bombings shocked most of India and resulted in widespread condemnation from leaders across the world with many countries showing solidarity with India in its fight against terrorism. This was the first time terrorists had targeted Jaipur, India's tenth largest city and one of its most popular tourist destinations. The bombs went off near historic monuments at one of the busiest times of the day. One of the bombs exploded close to Jaipur's most famous landmark, the historic Hawa Mahal (palace of winds). Two days after the blasts, a previously unknown Islamic terrorist group known as Indian Mujahideen, sent an e-mail to Indian media in which they claimed responsibility for the attacks and said they would "demolish the faith (Hinduism)" of the "infidels of India". Though the Indian authorities said that the e-mail was genuine, they also added that there were some contradictions and the primary motive of the e-mail might be to mislead investigating agencies. Indian Home Ministry sources said that a Bangladeshbased organization, Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI) or "Islamic Holy War Movement", was suspected to be behind the attack. The police were also able to find credible evidence linking the suspected bombers to Bangladeshi militants which resulted in backlash against illegal Bangladeshi immigrants in Rajasthan. India plans to expel more than 50,000 Bangladeshi migrants in Rajasthan. Four people were sentenced to death on 20 December 2019.[11,12]



Jaipur serial bomb blasts (manmade disaster)

## **Implications**

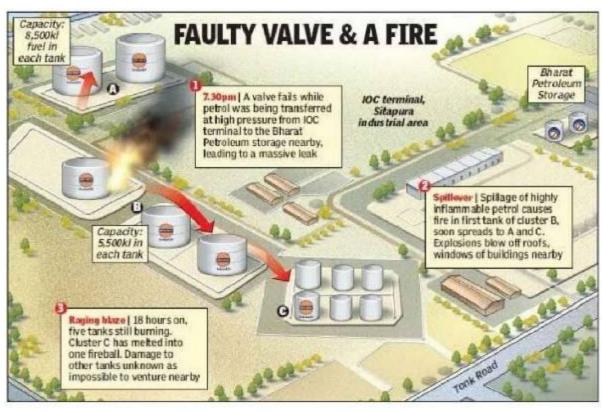
In addition to the above two more FIR 241/09 dated 2 November 2009 by Mr. Prit Pal Singh of Genus Overseas an Industrial unit in Sitapura and FIR 242/09 dated 3 November 2009 by Mr. B. L. Meharada of BLM Institute have been registered against Indian Oil by Police Station Sanganer Sadar. A city court in Sanganer has ordered registering of FIR on the complaint of Ayush Hotel Sitapura. On 2 July 2010, eight months after the devastating fire at an Indian Oil Corp (IOC) fuel depot that killed 11 people, police arrested 9 senior company officials including its general manager on charges of criminal negligence. IOC general manager for Rajasthan Mr. Gautam Bose and 8 other officers were arrested under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) including section 304-II (culpable homicide not amounting to murder). Section 304-II of IPC carries a maximum prison term of 10 years. Those arrested in connection with the fire caused by leakage of petrol during transfer from storage tank, included chief of operations at IOC's Jaipur Office, Mr. Rajesh Sayal. The others arrested are Mr. Shashank Shekhar, Manager Operation, Mr. K S Kanojia, Senior Terminal Manager, Mr. Arun Poddar, Manager Terminal, Mr. Kapil Goyal, Deputy Manager Terminal, Mr. Ashok Gupta, Operation Officer, Mr. Kailash Nath Agarwal, Chargeman, and Mr. S S Gupta, DGM Pipeline who is presently posted in Ghaziabad. While eight accused have been enlarged on bail, Mr. Ashok Kumar Gupta is still in judicial custody after 4 months. The next hearing in the matter is fixed on 11 November 2010. Ms. Savita Saroha and Ms. Alka Kumar whose husbands Mr. S. K. Saroha and Mr. Ravindra Kumar died in the Fire on 29 October 2009 have moved to Rajasthan High Court for equitable and fair compensation. The duo allege that they were not given the compensation of Rs. 1,000,000 (One million rupees) promised by Mr. Murli Deora the Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India. The widows are also upset that the company Indian Oil and the arrested officers have tried to pass on blame on their husbands. They are now opposing the accused officers in High Court against quashing of First Information Report and grant of bail to them.[11,12]

In case of Jaipur bombings, a little-known group Indian Mujahideen claimed responsibility for the attacks and sent a video to Aaj Tak via e-mail supposedly featuring the bicycles wrapped with explosives used during the attacks. The address from which the e-mail was terror sent was reported to "guru\_alhindi\_jaipur@yahoo.co.uk". News agencies reported that the video showed a serial number on one of the bicycles as '129489'. [13,14] Police officials confirmed that the bicycle used in Choti Choupad blast had the same serial number. However, Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje also suggested that a secondary objective of the e-mail could also be to mislead the investigating authorities. In the e-mail, the group threatened an "open war against India" unless it stops supporting the United States and United Kingdom on "international issues".It also said that it would "demolish the faith (Hinduism)" of the "infidels of India".[15,16]



### **Conclusions**

The State Government promptly announced a cash compensation of Rs. 2,000,000.00 to the dead and in addition Indian Oil Corporation paid Rs. 10,000,000.00 to the next of the kin of dead and varied amount of compensation between Rs. 1,000,000.00 and 2,000,000.00 to the injured. It has been decided to review the location of all Oil Terminals throughout India and shift these terminals beyond city limits within a period of next 12–18 months. The Sitapura Industries Association has 1383 units, consisting of 325 garment, 115 jewellers, 110 handicraft, and other units like chemical, cable, manufacturing, IT, BPO, Auto parts, Educational Institutes and Hospitals having an investment of over 750 billion. The Sitapura Industries Association have played an important part in shaping the economy of the State of Rajasthan and generation of employment (approximately 1,000,000 direct/indirect workers). The Sitapura Industries Association has played an important role in exports and generation of foreign exchange. That on 29 October 2009 at about 4:00 p.m. some leakage of Petrol started in IOC Terminal and by 6:00 p.m. the fumes had spread far and wide in and around the Indian Oil Corporation terminal. That a huge explosion and fire erupted at 7:35 p.m. and the noise and shock waves were so intense that it gave an impression of an earthquake to the Industries of the area. The neighbouring industries adjacent to the Indian Oil Corporation terminal suffered major structural damages, loss of inventory, equipment, and finished goods.



As a consequence of the Fire and associated hazards the District Collector, Jaipur declared a 5 km. zone as dangerous area and prohibited entry of the persons and vehicles in the area. The Sitapura Industries Association claims to have lost Rs. 4000 million of property, equipment and inventory instantaneously on 29 October 2009. Thereafter the loss of production, dispatch and consequent loss of goodwill is valued at Rs. 2000 million per day. The industries were allowed free access to their units since 5 November 2009. The total estimated loss is valued at 18000 million. As an EPZ is part of the Sitapura Industrial Area it houses a number of export-oriented units. The peak season for the export oriented units was at handshake. Due to fire and subsequent pollution and dispersion of carbon soot particles in atmosphere almost 100% finished garments would

fail in stringent quality test and would have to be dumped in the domestic market at throwaway prices. As the industries are most likely to falter on their export commitment, the loss of Goodwill will takes years to rebuild. On 10 December 2009, the Indian Minister of State of Petroleum and Natural Gas Jitin Prasad said the government today ruled out a C.B.I. / केंद्रीय अन्वेषण ब्यूरो probe into the November fires and informed the Lok Sabha and the Indian press that a Committee had- 'ruled out sabotage or terrorism', blamed both 'corporate neglect' and 'severe radiant heat' from the October fires, and denied any connection with a similar, but smaller blast that month in Kashmir.

The Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Vasundhara Raje, said "I condemn this blast.[17]



They have tried to ruin the communal harmony of the state but they will not succeed. Never in the history of Rajasthan such a heinous incident has happened and this is not an attack on the state but on the nation". She also added, "there are some slender leads on which the state agencies are working and its difficult to name any terror outfit at present". The Chief Minister also laid emphasis on a new anti-terror legislation either similar to POTA or to the one in the neighbouring state of Gujarat. She also criticised the President of India for not signing an anti-terror bill passed by the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly in 2006. Raje also expressed her concern that the terrorist attacks in Jaipur will negatively affect the tourism industry there. The Chief Minister also said that Rajasthan will have its own anti-terror force and also proposed a joint task force between Indian states.[18,19]

India's main opposition party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), blamed the United Progressive Alliance (UPA)-government for not taking adequate measures against terrorism in India and re-newed calls for POTA were made. The BJP also demanded that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence should be on international terror watch-list. India's Leader of Opposition, L. K. Advani, said "The blasts are reflective of the states' inability to preempt these strikes." Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi accused the UPA government of adopting double standards on terrorism and said, "The UPA-led government at the Centre should make the people realise that it is committed to curb terrorism spreading in our country."[20]

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