Date: 17. 01. 2017

On 15th January, 2017, six persons died and several were injured during stampede as it appears from the news item.

The Commission is of the opinion that an independent enquiry by the Commission is required. Let such enquiry be made and the report be submitted within 15 days i.e. 2nd February, 2017.

(Justice Girish Chandra Gupta) Chairperson

> (Naparajit Mukherjee) Member

> > Member

Ld. Registrar to keep NHRC posted about cognizance taken on the subject by WBHRC.

SDR

Kachuberia stampede: Finger pointed at poor crowd management, lack of dredging

APARAJIT CHAKRABORTY

aparajit.2008@gmail.com Sagar Island, 16 January

Yesterday's tragic deaths of six pilgrims at Kachuberia in South 24-Parganas on their way back home after taking the holy dip here were only waiting to happen, for what led to the mishap was improper crowd management of the local police and poor dredging.

Six persons, including two women, all aged between 60 and 75 had died and several others injured, during a near stampede that took p'ace at jetty no 5 in Kochuberia where thousands of pilgrims had been waiting since 10 a.m. yesterday.

The incident took place at around 6 p.m. Vessel services had been suspended for six hours during low tide on Muriganga river and thereafter the police let thou-



sands of pilgrims at a time to board a vessel," said Arup Bose, a middle aged pilgrim who refused to board the vessel and decided to wait.

"There was a mad rush after the announcement. Soon I heard people screaming", said Bose, a resident of Barrackpore who went to Gangasagar to take the holy dip on 13 January.

"The pilgrims panicked

after the announcement regarding the suspension of vessel services and they started to run helter skelter," said Ms Arati Chatterjee, another pilgrim.

Senior officers of South 24-Parganas, however, remained tight-lipped regarding the reason behind yesterday's tragedy.

"Dredging was not done properly. There is a need for deep dredging to operate vessels services during low tide", said a senior official on condition of anonymity.

"The mishap occurred as the pilgrims got impatient due to the long queue at jetty number five in Kachuberia and tried to outdo others in boarding the vessel", Manturam Pakhira, state Sundarbans development minister said

Six dead, 10 injured while returning from Sagar Island

Kolkata: At least six pilgrims were killed and 10 injured on Sunday afternoon at the Kachuberia jetty in Sagar Island, South 24-Parganas, in a rush to board a vessel back to Kolkata from the just-ended Gangasagar fair.

The six victims were between 60 and 75 years old. None of them was from Bengal. There were initial reports of a stampedeat the fair, but Trinamool Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien pointed out that the event had ended. "Setting record straight. District M has also clarified. Gargasagar Mela has ended peacerully. No stampede. Thank you all for



The scene at the Kachuberia jetty after the incident

your concern," he tweeted.

Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent out two tweets: "Saddened by the loss of lives caused by a stampede

in West Bengal. My thoughts are with the families of the deceased", and "My prayers with those injured in the stampede in West Bengal. May they recover quickly". He also announced compensation of Rs 2 lakh each for the families of the deceased and Rs 50,000 each for the injured from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund.

"The PMO wasn't apprised properly. The incident took place after the Gangasagar Meia. It was only an unfortunate accident. A stampede there could have had diastrous consequences, it didn't happen," said a Trinamool source.

▶Pilgrims fell ill: DM, P 3