

In first week of July, 78 Hare Krishna Temple at Juhu, Bombay suddenly became talk of the Town. Curfew order and police pattol was enforced in the area. Prayers and Dances of American Devotees on devotion tunes came to halt. Temple was kept open only for half an hour and Bhajans were played through stereo. Western devotees normally sleeping on a carpet on spread on the naked floor were summoned to the 'ISCON HOTEL'. Police cars, crammed with policemen started running up and down the streets blowing sirens. All this because a murder at the temple.

One version of the incidents goes like this-

A film dancer-Dilip Malhotra was a resident of flats in the temple compound. After seeing a film Malhotra and his wife were coming to the house. As soon as they enter the compound the guard on the gate started misbehaving with Mrs. Malhotra. Dilip and Guard were excitedly talking when the manager reached the scene. He supported the guard and they started arguing with Mr. Malhotra. During this dispute Dilip was hit with an iron rod and he died before reaching the hospital.

The other version was issued by the ISCON Officials.

At the main gate of the temple some one lost his shoes. People confiscated the shoes from one person. As a penalty he was forced to wear the show garland. After some time Dilip Malhotra an illegal resident of the Mandir Compound reached there and argued with the guard supporting the thief. In the conflict that followed Dilip Malhotra was hit with an iron rod. He died in the hospital as a result of the injuries.

This news of Dilips' death spread in the area like fire. Thousands of people gathered in front of the 'ISCON HOTEL' giving slogans. It was ten p.m. in the night, and no police protection was available. Dead body of the deceased was placed in the court yard which agitated the crowd fiercely. Considering the seriousness of the situation American President of ISCON came down. He assured the public that a compensation of Rs. 1,20,000 will be given to the wife of the deceased, which calmed down the crowd to some extent.

In the circumstances it was necessary, otherwise no one would tell what would have happened—explained legal adviser of ISCON Shri P.K.Maheshwari. He further stated the temple has nothing to do with the whole incident. A local Corporator who was defeated by Janata Party candidate in last election, is trying to black mail the Krishna Bhaktas. He only annoied the ISCON officials to drop the matter for a ransom of Rs.1,20,000.

In court yard at the back of the temple few two storied buildings are constructed. In these small thirty residential flats tenants are residing. ISCON receives Rs.100/- per month as a rent from each resident. Behind these buildings eight families live in small huts ~~xxxxxxx~~ for which rent is Rs.15/- per month. Dilip Malhotra and his wife Iris were one of these residents. Both of them used to work in film group dances. Each dancer gets Rs.30/- to Rs.70/- per eight hour shift.

On 19th July I visited Iris's place. The room was locked. Iris has been to her mother for few days. Her neighbour friend Geeta told 'She was with Iris on the night of mishap', I saw the guard harrasing Iris ~~xxxx~~ and the argument followed!. ISCON Officials never liked our staying here.