

## LOK SABHA DEBATES

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*Saturday, September 14, 1991/Bhadra 23,  
1913 (Saka)*

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*The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the  
Clock*

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

[*Translation*]

SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA (South Delhi) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to say about Delhi. It was said that.....

MR. SPEAKER : I am not giving you time.

SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA : You had said that you would give me time and the sitting of the House has been extended for two days.....

MR. SPEAKER : I am not giving you time. I am giving time to Shri Saifuddin Choudhury.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY (Katwa) : Sir, we agreed that today there would be no zero hours. I am not making any zero hour submission. But this is a very serious national issue..... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : Today I hope the senior Member will allow the Junior Members to raise points on which they feel concerned.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY : Due to the strike by the ONGC employees, the country is incurring a heavy loss everyday. I have come to know that the daily loss amounts to Rs. 30 crores. Due to this strike, production of crude oil and gas is totally stopped. We produce 5,60,000 barrels of oil per day all over the country wherever oil is produced. 27,000 million cubic meters of gas is produced in the country. The production of gas cylinders comes to about 50,000 per day. Now all this production activity has come to a halt.

This strike is taking place because of the inaction of the concerned authorities to conduct proper negotiations to conduct proper negotiations to secure the release of their colleagues who are in the captivity of the ULFA in Assam. Some days ago, one of their colleagues Shri B.S.Raju was killed. This has created a feeling of insecurity in the minds of the ONGC workers in Assam. They also say that proper negotiations are not conducted and people with proper authority are not posted there to deal with the situation. There are also many questions about the way the ULFA problem in Assam is dealt with so far. They have raised serious objections to the general kind of amnesty given to the ULFA activists who were in the custody of the Government, without any bargain for the release of the ONGC employees. This is a very serious situation because it is not only a matter of ONGC workers and the loss we are incurring everyday. Now the Finance Minister is here. Shri Shankaranandji is standing at the gate. Why is he not coming in? He visited Assam. What has he done there? We have a right to know... (*Interruptions*) Sir, it is not merely a question of losing money. It is a question of unity and integrity of the country.

It is a question of how we tackle the ULFA secessionist movement in Assam. Not only the ONGC workers, but many others are also feeling insecure to live in Assam. Many are coming out. Extortion of money is going on. We have to have a discussion on this. I thought the hon. Minister himself would come with a *sou motu* statement. But in today's list of Business, I do not find any mention of it. That is why I am compelled and constrained to raise this issue, despite our commitment that we would not stand up today during the zero hour. I request you Sir to ask the hon. Minister to inform this House about the situation. How long are we going to suffer this heavy loss? How are they dealing with this situation? How are they tackling the secessionist movement led by the ULFA. The employees and their leaders are here. I think they have met the Minister yesterday. We would like to know what came out of that. I request the Minister to take the House into confidence.

**SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR** (Mangalore): Sir, we fully support the demand made by Shri Saifuddin Choudhury. Leaders of the employees union have come and met our senior leaders like Advani Ji and Jaswant Singh Ji. They have expressed their concern about the loss that has been sustained. Every day the Government of India is losing about Rs. 30 crores on account of the employees going on strike. We all know that this has happened because of the policy adopted by the Government of Assam in giving general amnesty to the ULFA people. This has very severe repercussions and we are very much concerned about the safety of the people who have been abducted by the ULFA activities.

The Government, of course, has expressed its concern about this but it has not come out with concrete proposal, as to how they are going to tackle this problem. Government should make a Statement on the floor of the House and it must initiate an early dialogue with them. Government must secure the release of the people who have

been detained and it must come to the rescue of the people who have been abducted by the ULFA activities, otherwise, we will have this recurring loss on the one side and on the other side the safety to the lives and property of the citizens of this country, who are working hard to earn and to add to the economy of this country, will be put in the danger. Therefore, the Government should come to the rescue of these people.

We all join to support the demand made by the hon. Member on the floor of the House. Sir, I hope that when I am making this reference, Government will definitely take up this matter seriously and the hon. Minister, who is present here, will make a statement in this regard and he will ensure the release of the abducted people today itself, at the earliest possible opportunity. *(Interruptions)*

**MR. SPEAKER:** Those of you who are treated as senior Members will not be called today.

*[Translation]*

**SHRI MOHAN RAWLE** (Bombay South Central): Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to narrate the problems being faced by the Maharastrians in Maharashtra. There is a very peculiar situation in the country today. Wherever the public sector units are set up under the control of the Central Government, in all fairness the local people should be given 80 percent of the jobs in every category in those units. But this is not happening in Maharashtra. It appears that perhaps the Central Government has not issued any directions in this regard. As a result, there is a widespread resentment among the local people because there is a problem of unemployment also. Therefore, I would request the Government that it should issue such instructions immediately as in all the undertakings of the Central Government in Maharashtra, the local people may be given 80 per cent of the jobs in every category.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I will call you. Please, sit down.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRISHIVASHARAN SINGH (Vaishali): Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the House and the hon. Prime Minister towards an important issue. In Bihar the Congress Party has started an agitation against the State Government. They started this agitation on 11th of September in Patna in the prohibited area of the State Assembly and it is a matter of regret that a Central Minister also took part in it and deliberately violated the laws. Secondly, is it justified for a Central Minister to take part in an agitation, which is being launched by a political party against the State Government? I would like to draw the attention of the House and the hon. Prime Minister towards these two points. I remember an incident, when Shri Raj Narain was a cabinet Minister, he had also violated the rule in a prohibited area in Himachal Pradesh and as a result, the then Prime Minister Chaudhary Charan Singh had expressed his displeasure against his action. The hon. Prime Minister should give clarification whether there is any code of conduct for the Cabinet Ministers. Through you, I would like only to draw the attention of the House towards this. (Interruptions)

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN (Roseria): Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is a very important issue and I also support him. (Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur): Sir, you have allowed other issues to come up.

But so far as ONGC is concerned, it is a very serious matter. What is the response of the Government to that? They must indicate. The Minister was saying and also the

Prime Minister that Shri Shankaranand is going there. He was there for two days. We must know what is the position.

Sir, as you thought it very important, that is why you allowed Shri Choudhury to raise it. But the Government is just sitting. There is no response from them on this matter.

Sir, some statement must be made today. Let us see what is the intention of the Government on this matter.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY: If he remains silent, it will be misunderstood.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Sir, he is nodding his head. I do not know in whose favour he is nodding his head. For whom? For what? you say 'yes' or 'no' (Interruptions) He wants to stand up.

SHRI CHANDRA JEET YADAV (Azamgarh): Let the Minister react. Because, it is after all a very serious matter. You will agree that it is a serious matter. When is he going to make a statement? At least, you ask him that he must come and make a statement. Let the country know what has actually happened. We are reading this in newspapers. (Interruptions)

SHRI CHITTA BASU (Barasat): He met the representatives of the ASSTO-Association of Technical Officers.....

MR. SPEAKER: In this way, the other Members will not be able to get a chance. Because all the senior Members, on one point will make the speeches and the other Members will not have an opportunity to speak.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Only one minute, Sir, kindly listen to me.

MR. SPEAKER: No, Shri Basu. You get ample time. You should do justice to other Members also.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: The hon. Minister said that technical employees have met

him. They said that the talks have failed. May I know from the hon. Minister what was the demand of the employees and what was his response ? (*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI DAU DAYAL JOSHI (Kota): Mr. Speaker, Sir, indeed there is a shortage of petrol. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA (Pali): Mr. Speaker, Sir, in Jorhat, 50 businessmen had been kidnapped from their shops and are being killed one by one.

[*English*]

They are kept as hostages.

[*Translation*]

We had thought that after the fall of A.G.P. Government and forming of the Congress Government the people will get protection there, but the situation has become worres, as:-

"Marj Badhataa Gaya, Jyon-Jyon Dava  
KI,  
Shole Urate Gaye, Jyon-Jyon  
Hawa KI."

Therefore, I would like to know the steps being taken to condemn such acts of ULFA. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA (Jaipur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, along with them we are concerned about the businessmen of Rajasthan also. They are very much afraid. They are kidnapped in board/day light from their shops. (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: He is on his legs to make a statement.

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the

hon. Members in the House are rightly agitated over the matter. It is also true that their agitation with regard to the strike by OGNC employees is fully shared by me also. Unfortunately, the OGNC is functioning in Assam has taken a difficult turn after the death of Shri Raju, the Engineer of the ONGC.

SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA: Death or murder?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Let the hon. Member listen to me first. I know what is death and what is murder. But we are not talking in legalistic terms.

As the House is aware, I spent two days in Assam. I had a discussion with the Governor, the Chief Minister and the Members of his Cabinet. I also had a discussion with the various associations, the employees of the OGNC, the workers' Unions, the officers' associations and the members of the Coordination Committee. I also met the women, the wives of the engineers of the ONGC. Finally, I did have talks with the agitating engineers who were sitting in a Shamiana with a photo of Raju. I could gather an impression that all the people there were in the grip of fear and uncertainty. The women were shedding tears because they expressed a fear that they did not know whether their husbands will come back alive from their work. Such a situation is existing there; a very tense situation is existing there.

Of course, there has been large scale sympathy from the people of Assam for these engineers and the ONGC people. There was a silent march in Guwahati by intellectuals; it was a non-political gathering belonging to all the political parties. The purpose was to express their concern for peace in Assam. This large scale sympathy that has now been expressed by the people of Assam, their desire for peaceful conditions in Assam does of a long way in solving the problem of Assam.

As far as I am concerned, I did have detailed talks with these people; and they

have expressed their desire that their first demand is the release of four hostages held by the ULFA. I was satisfied with the effort made which were explained to me by the Chief Minister and the Government with regard to the release of these people, and also the arrangement made for the safety and security of the people of ONGC. When I was there, the very day-I do not know whether it was on the previous day- all the political parties in Assam have appealed to the Chief Minister in writing to take the necessary steps for the release of these people.

**SHRI JASWANT SINGH (Chittorgarh):** Would you show me the courtesy of just yielding for a minute? Thank you very much. We are very grateful to the hon. Minister for so graphically informing us about the situation in Assam. We are sufficiently aware of what the prevailing situation is. Our collective concern, however, is to know from you as to what action the Government is talking to resolve this issue, not a description of the situation in Assam. What are the precise steps that the Government is talking to resolve this issue, which is costing us Rs. 30 crores a day and it has already resulted in one death and so many people are still kidnapped. what steps are you taking?

**SHRI B. SHANKARANAND:** I thought it is advisable to explain to the House the agitation in detail rather than...

**SHRISOMNATHCHATTERJEE:** So that it is known that the Government also understands.

**SHRI B. SHANKARANAND:** Thereafter, I had a meeting with the association of the ONGC employees. As I told earlier, the main demand of the association is the release of the hostages and the ONGC engineers who were held as hostages by the ULFA. Of course, they have put some other conditions for the strike—the change of transfer policy of the employees; to provide security arrangement for the employees and many other things which are not directly concerned with the present strike.

**SHRI CHITTA BASU:** The question of compensation was there. (*Interruptions*)

**SHRI B. SHANKARANAND:** It is not on the matter of compensation that they have gone on strike. Let us be clear in our minds, that the condition to strike is not compensation. That is not the matter. Their first demand is the release of the people and their safety. (*Interruptions*)

I had talked to the Chief Minister and the Chief Minister has offered that everything that should be done for the release of these people would be done, at his end, and he said that even for exchange of the hostages, not only releasing one after the other, if the hostages are released, at one and the same time the ULFA'S that are held under the TADA can also be released, but simultaneously. Because once the ULFA had tricked, during the negotiations they killed the engineer. They have lost their credibility as far as this aspect is concerned. So, the condition that the Chief Minister has put is, "Yes, we are for taking any action for the release of the people, but if they think that their people should be released, it should be done simultaneously and not otherwise. This offer stands." According to me, the Chief Minister said that this offer stands. I hope that the House will appreciate the action taken by the Government in this regard.

I had talked to the officers yesterday. The Central Committee Members of the ONGC met me yesterday. I had very detailed talks with them. I found them to be very agitated. In the mood of agitation perhaps, they have not been able to come to grips with certain conditions which demand an objective discussion. Though they have said that they were not willing to call off the strike yesterday, I am happy to inform the House that they are again meeting me today and I hope that they will cooperate with us in further creating conditions for the safe release of the officers who are held hostages.

**SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE:** How long will they have to wait? For how many days have they been kidnapped?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: The meeting is being held today.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: The seriousness of the Government's action must be seen.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Do not create problems for the safety of the people.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: I am not creating problems for their safety. But the Government has a responsibility. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Kumari Vimla Verma.

[*Translation*]

KUMARI VIMLA VERMA (Seoni): Mr. Speaker, Sir, a group of about 100 padyatris was going to Sri Perambudur from Amethi in Uttar Pradesh to pay homage to immortal martyr Shri Rajiv Gandhi. On the 11th, this group was passing through the Seoni district in Madhya Pradesh, where some unsocial elements attacked them in Sanai Dongri Village. Three of the Padyatris were injured in the attack. They gave a symbolic dharna there. Shri Jagdish Piyush, who was leading this group of Padyatris and all the villagers and people of the district condemned this attack on this peaceful padyatra. This incident took place as a result of not taking any strict action in cases of violence and armed booth capturing, which took place during the last elections and a particular party is involved in these incidents. The Madhya Pradesh Government should get this incident investigated and should take stringent action against the culprits. It should also investigate the violent incidents which took place during the elections and take appropriate action in this regard. I would also make this request to the Central Government also.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Rajveer Singh, Shri Lal K. Advani has yielded place to Shri Rajveer Singh.

(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRICHHEDIPASWAN (Sasaram): Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are also members of the House but we are not getting opportunity to speak. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I will give you time to speak. Time can be given only one by one. Please take your seat.

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH (Aonia): Mr. Speaker, Sir, on 13th of September, an Ayurveda Conference took place in Kathmandu, Nepal, in which several countries participated. The Indian delegation was led by the Health Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Dr. Dinesh Jauhari. On the 12th the formalities of checking etc. were completed at the Air-port at 4.00 pm for going to Kathmandu, but he was asked to sit in the V.I.P. lounge. The flight was scheduled for 6.30 p.m. He was told that the flight was cancelled. At about 8.00 or 8.30 p.m., he was provided accommodation in hotel Centaur and was told that the time of departure of the flight was yet to be decided. For the entire night, he was told that the flight would leave in a few minutes. But yesterday at 10 o'clock in the morning, he was told that the flight has been canceled so he also cannot go as he was not permitted to go, although he had already been granted permission. One of the reasons, for not allowing Dr. Dinesh Jauhari to go to Kathmandu may be that he was representing not only Uttar Pradesh, but the entire country. It appears to me that some people in the Central Government did not like it as to why a health Minister belonging to B.J.P. was representing the country in this conference?

When the whole day has passed and the inauguration was performed at 5.00 P.M. yesterday, a letter was sent to him that he can go by taking the flight scheduled to leave at 8.00 p.m. As a protest, the entire delegation boycotted the conference and no one represented our country at the Ayurveda Conference. (*Interruptions*) our country could