

NOTIFICATIONS UNDER CENTRAL EXCISE RULES, 1944 CENTRAL EXCISE (6TH AMDT) RULES, 1978, NOTIFICATION UNDER CUSTOMS ACT 1962 AND DELHI SALES TAX (1ST AMDT) RULES, 1978 ALONG WITH A STATEMENT

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ZULFIKARULLAH) I beg to lay on the Table

(1) A copy each of the following Notifications (Hindi and English versions) issued under the Central Excise Rules, 1944 —

(i) GSR 204 (E) and 205 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 30th March, 1978, together with an explanatory memorandum

(ii) GSR 206 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 31st March 1978

(iii) GSR 208 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 31st March 1978 [Placed in Library See No LT-2035/78]

(2) A copy of the Central Excise (Sixth Amendment) Rules 1978 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No GSR 207 (E) in Gazette of India dated the 31st March, 1978 under section 88 of the Central Excises and Salt Act, 1944 [Placed in Library See No LT-2036/78]

(3) A copy of Notification No GSR 220 (E) (Hindi and English versions) published in Gazette of India dated the 1st April, 1978 under section 159 of the Customs Act 1962 together with an explanatory memorandum [Placed in Library See No LT-2037/78]

(4) (i) A copy of the Delhi Sales Tax (First Amendment) Rules, 1978 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No F 4(2)/78-Fin (Genl) in Delhi Gazette dated the 16th February,

1978, under section 72 of the Delhi Sales Tax Act, 1975

(ii) A statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the above Notification [Placed in Library See No LT-2038/78]

12 20 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

REPORTED INDEFINITE TOOLS DOWN STRIKE BY WORKERS PARALYSING WORK AT THE VIKRAM SARABHAI SPACE CENTRE AT THUMBA

SHRI M RAM GOPAL REDDY (Nizamabad) I call the attention of the Prime Minister to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon

The reported indefinite tools down strike by workers paralysing work at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre at Thumba

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI

MORARJI DESAI) Mr Speaker, Sir, I am obliged to the Hon Member for having raised the question before the House which enables me to put the whole matter in its proper perspective and show how oblivious of the country's interests in keeping such an undertaking continuously in operation a section of the employees on a question of minor importance is prepared to hold the Space Centre, and through them the Government to ransom

The whole trouble arose as a result of the implementation of the decision of the Space Commission to rationalise transport charges and prescribe uniform rate of subsidy for plate meals in all Indian Space Research Organisation canteens. The House will be interested to know that in other ISRO Centres at Sriharikota, Bangalore and Ahmedabad this

scheme has been implemented without any agitation on the part of the employees. At the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Thumba, however, an agitation was mounted by the employees on Saturday the 1st April and on the morning of Monday the 3rd April there was violent agitation, stone throwing and assault and intimidation of engineers outside the Rocket Fabrication Facility. The workers attacked the factory and caused extensive damage to plant equipment, machinery and other Government property. A detailed assessment of the quantum of damage is being made.

Faced with this situation and in fulfilment of their duty to maintain law and order the State Government police and the local Additional District Magistrate intervened but the position was not brought under control until as a result of stone throwing the magistrate of the State Government was injured and hospitalised.

SHRI K P UNNIKRISHNAN (Badagara) Why magistrate of the State Government?

SHRI MORARJI DESAI Arising out of this some employees have been arrested in connection with the violent incidents and three cases for investigation in connection with the assault on the Additional District Magistrate and damage to Government property have been registered. Shri Oomen Chandy, Minister for Labour, Government of Kerala, interceded and held separate discussions with the Controller, VSSC, and the representatives of the workers. Among the points raised by the employees were

- 1 Shifting the location of X-Ray and Radiographic units at the Rocket Fabrication Facility in view of alleged violation of safety and health standards. I may state that the whole question has been examined in great detail by an expert of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre who went into the question for three days and reviewed all the safety precautions

and was satisfied that there was no radiation hazard whatsoever which would constitute a health risk.

- 2 Reduction in the cost of plate meals from Re 1/- per plate meal to the earlier price of sixty five paise. This is the second point. It was explained that a uniform subsidy not exceeding thirty five paise per plate meal had been fixed whereas previously the quantum was larger and there was no limit on the amount of food served on a plate meal. Nevertheless the Centre authorities expressed readiness to make necessary adjustments and lower the price of the plate meal subject to a corresponding reduction in the quantum of the food elements that constituted the plate meal.

- 3 Restoration of salary cuts effected on account of unauthorised absenteeism in earlier agitations. Since the principle of No work no pay has been well established the position was explained to them and since they have absented themselves deliberately the same principle would have to be applied.

The House will notice that notwithstanding the resort by a section of the employees to violence the Centre authorities adopted a conciliatory attitude but the only response has been for the employees to go on strike and see that no activity worth the name takes place in the Centre. The employees however are not only continuing their strike but the employees who want to work are being prevented from functioning and are being forced out of their offices. It is understood that two cars belonging to the Centre have already been destroyed by the agitators.

I have stressed more than once the obligation on the part of both employers and employees to settle points of dispute by resort to negotiations. It is quite clear that in this case the employees have chosen the path of violence and indulgence in damage to public property. They have failed to recognise that by causing damage they were not caus-

(Shri Morarji Desai)

ing injury only to the individuals, officers or otherwise, but to the country itself, because the factory is undoubtedly of vital importance and is an asset to the institution. It is reprehensible that in order to force the authorities into conceding their demand the employees have lost sight of their obligations to the very properties of the Centre on which and in respect of which their work depends. I cannot but strongly condemn this attitude of the employees and I should like to make it clear to the House that there can be no submission to such tactics of violence and wanton injury to public property. I understand that an Hon. Member of the House is in Trivandrum and that three meetings were held outside the premises of the Centre yesterday after the permission for holding meetings within the premises had been refused. This was followed by a meeting in the city at which the employees were asked to continue their illegal strike. I am also informed that some employees are dragging staff out and indulging in coercion and intimidatory action to the point of even cutting of water and electricity. Obviously we have to deal with these activities with firmness. If per chance violence is again repeated, there would be no alternative but to take measures to protect Government property and to deal with the situation with such force that may be required and may be at our disposal.

SHRI M RAM GOPAL REDDY: I am grateful to the Prime Minister for having made a detailed statement. But I want to say that our Prime Minister is the greatest Gandhian living in this country. Sometimes the sanest persons and the credulous persons are also made to utter, if not lies, at least untruths, half truths. In Mahabharat Yodha, Dharmaputra's chariot used to move in the battle field about one foot above the ground level. Here our Prime Minister is made to utter at least some half truths and now he has come down to the level of all other Members of this House.

Now, here the main point is the workers wanted only food subsidy as was existing for the last six years.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS TRANSPORT.

SHRI M RAM GOPAL REDDY
Both

Transport was given to the persons working there. The Vikram Sarabhai Station is situated about twenty miles away from the main city. There is nothing available in that area and in such places the people working there should be given full meals. The Prime Minister says that you pay for the half. But they cannot work on empty stomach.

He is very much interested in the factory. We are also interested in the factory. But I want to know from the Prime Minister, is he not interested in the workers who are working there? Those workers are working in the factory for the last six years. There was not a single strike.

Why, all of a sudden, has this erupted? I request the Prime Minister to go into details and find out why it has happened and, the Prime Minister also referred to an hon. Member of this House, that is, Mr. Vayalar Ravi. He is an experienced trade union leader, he is also very much interested in this country and in the plant and unnecessarily he will never ask the workers to go on strike. As a matter of fact, the strike was forced by the inefficient officers and engineers who are not working upto efficiency required. These officers and engineers have prompted the administration to stop the transport and also the subsidy for food. Is it right on the part of the Government to stop these two things which are very vital for the maintenance of good health? Moreover the X-ray plant established near the workshop can be shifted to some other place. But, the Prime Minister says that it was examined by the experts of the Bhabha Atomic Research

Station for three days. Is it enough? Many of the workers are not having children due to radioactivity and their health is also affected. I want to know from the Prime Minister whether he wants to reduce the population by this method. I request him to reconsider the whole issue and not to paralyse the work there and he may immediately start negotiations with the workers. The State Government was ready to mediate in this. Mr. Chandy was doing his best but the management and the Central Government are very adamant. They are not at all listening to reason. That is why the trouble has arisen. I want to know whether the Prime Minister will leave the entire case to the State Government officials who are responsible persons?

MR SPEAKER I think it is enough.

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN: Please allow him. He is suggesting some solutions.

SHRI M RAM GOPAL REDDY: The State Government is in a position to control the situation. There is a feeling that the Central Government is trying to discredit the State Government and they are not allowing them to do their job. There is absolutely no necessity to send the military there. That is the provocation to the people. After all they are numbering 1,000 or 1,200 workers or so. When the State Government is controlling it, why has the Centre chosen to send the military there? You know, Sir, the military people may not be able to understand the local conditions. That was the reason why all these things had happened. That is why I request the Prime Minister to reconsider the whole issue and let him send the Labour Minister to the spot and see that he settles this dispute.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT (Chandigarh): Sir, I rise on a point of order for your consideration. The state-

ment which he has made—he talked of truths and half truths and then he said that the Prime Minister has come down to the level of a Member—can be a matter of privilege. Are we, Members, speaking half truths? He is degrading himself by that. I would request you to go through it so that such a statement which can be a matter of privilege—he does not mean it because he does not know what he speaks—does not find a place in the proceedings. (Interruptions).

SHRI SAUGATA ROY (Barrackpore): There must be some doubt because the Prime Minister was reading the statement. So, he only said the Prime Minister has come down to the level of a Member. (Interruptions).

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN: He said that it contained half-truths and untruths. This is what he was saying.

MR. SPEAKER: The point raised by Shri Krishan Kant is not about the half-truth or untruth. Shri Reddy might have said it in a jocular mood. He said that he was at a very high level at one time and he has now gone down to the lower level. This is what he said. I think he said it in a jocular mood. Let us not take it seriously. We are not small men to take it like that.

SHRI C. N. VISVANATHAN (Tiruppattur). Members are not at lower levels.

MR. SPEAKER: He said that in his jocular mood.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY: I never wanted to drag our Prime Minister to the level of an ordinary person. I did not mean any offence.

SHRI MORARJI DESAI: I am very grateful to my hon. friend for giving me a compliment at his own cost. But may I say I do not consider myself above the Members of this House? I cannot. I am as good or as bad as

(Shri Morarji Desai.)

any other member in the House. But after having given me the compliments about my faith in Gandhian philosophy he charges me with having believed half-truths but adds that I am made to utter them. It is good of him to say that I was made to do it. But that means I am very credulous; that I believe readily in what they say and that I make statements which are half-truths. Can he say that whatever he has said is true? But he has already accepted that what Members are doing is very wrong. I can not support him because nobody does that knowingly. It is possible that I may have been wrongly informed. If the hon'ble Member gives me details, I will make enquiries and punish the officer who gave me wrong information. But will the hon'ble Member apologise if he is wrong? I would expect that. But even if he does not do that, I will do my part. Let me say that. Because my doing my part does not depend upon whether another man does his. But in this case does he not see that the Labour Minister of Kerala Government was there, their Additional Magistrate was there and they are aware of the situation. They tried to negotiate with them. But he was injured. Why does he not see that? Whatever may be the rights or wrongs of the employees, they have no right to resort to violence under any circumstances whatsoever. That cannot be condoned. I will have to ask for damages from them for all the loss to the property because they have caused it. What would he have to say then? Therefore, why does he encourage such things by this method of supporting them. This is not right. This is not at all a correct thing to do. And, therefore, there is no question of not going into that. Already they want to consider and talk to them but until they go back to work and give up these methods, I am going to instruct them not to have any talks with them.

SHRI SAUGATA ROY: Is it a fact that the Prime Minister has written to the State Chief Minister asking him to withdraw the recognition or de-recognise the union led by Mr. Vayalar Ravi? If so, does it behave the Prime Minister? (Interruptions)

SHRI MORARJI DESAI: There are no union activities in this Centre. These are scientific installations. There cannot be any union activities.

SHRI SAUGATA ROY: Sir, is it a fact that the Prime Minister has written to the State Chief Minister to de-recognise the union led by Mr. Vayalar Ravi?

MR. SPEAKER: This is a separate matter. The Labour Minister will deal with this matter and not the Prime Minister. This is Call Attention motion

(Interruptions)

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN: Will you unilaterally withdraw the recognition given to a union?

SHRI MORARJI DESAI: I have written to the Chief Minister that these scientific installations do not fall under industrial relations.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, may I request him to withdraw the troops; he has not said anything about it. I request him to tell us whether he is going to withdraw the troops and also start negotiations with the workers.

MR. SPEAKER: He has already said it.

SHRI MORARJI DESAI: No military has been called; it is a lie. Until this morning there was none. If it was called in afterwards I do not know. (Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER: I have to accept what the hon. Ministers say.

SHRI SAUGATA ROY: I repeat my statement about the military... (Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER: Let us go to the next business. Shri Saugata Roy.