

16 hrs.

STATEMENT RE: FIRING AT
HINGIR STATION OF SOUTH
EASTERN RAILWAY

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, Mr. Qureshi to make a statement on the firing at Hingir Station of South Eastern Railway.

श्री रामाचतार शास्त्री (पटना) :
उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, रेलवे मंत्री कहां हैं ?
(अवधान)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Shastri, please sit down. I have heard you. Please listen to me. You just say something and you do not have the patience to listen. The Minister has written to me. There are very good reasons why he cannot be here, and I have permitted Mr. Qureshi to make the statement on his behalf. (Interruptions)

Mr. Qureshi.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI): The General Manager of the South Eastern Railway was to inspect a section of Bilaspur Division of the South Eastern Railway on the 26th instant along with his senior officers. The Inspection Train was scheduled to run between Jharsuguda and Bilaspur. It was not scheduled to stop at Hingir located a few stations from Jharsuguda. However, the General Manager received advice that some staff had collected at Hingir and had certain representations to make. He, therefore, decided to let the train stop at Hingir for a few minutes.

When the train reached Hingir Station at 9.45 hours, about 150 railway staff and others were found squatting on the track. The Secretary of the Raigarh Branch of the South Eastern Railwaymen's Union met the General Manager and presented a charter of demands. The

General Manager told him that he would be discussing certain matters with the Union representatives of Bilaspur Division on the 3rd March and promised to avail of the opportunity to discuss the charter of demands presented to him. However, the Secretary of the Union insisted that the General Manager should give an immediate decision on one of the demands viz., that the transfer of one Shri John Phillips, Assistant Station Master, Raigarh should be cancelled. The General Manager regretted his inability to give an on-the-spot decision. Another Union leader then delivered an inflammatory speech to the squatters exhorting them to hold up the Inspection train indefinitely.

Efforts made by the officers accompanying the General Manager to get the track cleared having failed the District Magistrate, Sundergarh (Orissa State), the Officer-in-charge, Police Thana, Hingir and the Officer-in-charge, Government Railway Police, Jharsuguda were contacted. The Officer Commanding, Government Railway Police, Jharsuguda accompanied by six constables reached Hingir by a goods train at 11.45 hours and tried, without success, to persuade the squatters to clear the track. He then gave them a warning that force would have to be used if they did not clear the track voluntarily. This also having produced no effect, he attempted to remove some of the squatters physically. This effort met with violent resistance and the Officer Commanding ordered a lathi charge, (Interruptions) following which the squatters started pelting stones on the Government Railway Police and the Railway Protection Force. Two Government Railway Police constables and three Railway Protection Force Rakshaks are reported to have been injured by stone pelting.

At this stage the Officer Commanding, Government Railway Police who had been given the assistance of four armed Railway Protection Force Rakshaks, ordered firing into the air.

Four rounds were fired into the air but produced no effect except to make the crowd still more violent. The Officer Commanding, Government Railway Police, apprehending danger to his own life and to those of the force accompanying him, ordered firing on the crowd. Eight rounds were fired, as a result of which one person was killed and seven injured. (*Interruptions*) One of the injured persons later succumbed to his injuries.

Both the dead persons were gangmen. Of the 6 injured persons, four are gangmen, one a keyman and one a pointsman

The dead bodies and the injured persons (who had earlier been given first aid by the D.M.O. and his staff) were taken over by the District Magistrate, Sundergarh and Superintendent of Police, Sundergarh. The injured persons are receiving treatment at the Steel Plant Hospital, Rourkela.

When news of this incident travelled to Bilaspur, the local branch of the S.E. Railwaymen's Union, decided to launch an agitation and announced that they would not allow any traffic to move unless the following demands were met:—(*Interruptions*)

- (a) A judicial enquiry into the firing.
- (b) Compensation to the families of the dead and to the injured.
- (c) Suspension of the O.C., G.R.P. who ordered the firing.
- (d) An assurance of non-victimisation by the Railway Administration. (*Interruptions*)
- (e) Transfer of the General Manager, South-Eastern Railway.

A judicial enquiry was agreed to by the Orissa Government on the afternoon of 27th February. The Railway Board had earlier agreed to

the grant of compensation to the affected families and had also agreed that there would be no victimisation of staff not involved in serious violence or sabotage.

The above decisions were conveyed to the local Union leaders of Bilaspur yesterday afternoon, and they agreed to call off the strike with effect from 8.00 p. m. of the 27th February. Traffic on Bilaspur Division remained at a standstill for about 24 hours.

Ex-gratia payments of Rs. 500 each have been made to the families of the dead persons (*Interruption*) while Rs. 100 each has been paid towards funeral expenses. The Railways Women's Organisation has, in addition, contributed Rs. 500 for each family.

As for the injured, *ex-gratia* payments of Rs. 300 each and contribution of Rs. 100 each from the Women's Organisation have been arranged.

SEVERAL HON MEMBERS rose—

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Kindly listen to me. Sit down, please.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Gwalior): We have given a notice.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I will come to everything. You will all be satisfied.

Now, normally, according to the Rule (*Interruptions*) Order, please. I am here to regulate the proceedings of the House. I will give everybody the fullest opportunity to express himself. I am only trying to regulate (*Interruptions*) Kindly listen to me for one or two minutes.

According to the Rules, when a statement is made, no question shall be asked. . . .

SHRI S. A. SHAMIM (Srinagar): But. . . .

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order please. I saw the proceedings of this morning also in which Mr. Indrajit Gupta—who is aware of this—he said:

“You can accept the call attention and he can make the statement today; let questions be asked tomorrow.”

That is what he said.

I would suggest that instead of breaking the rules the Rules are to be adhered to by us—the best thing is to resort to another course. I see that under Rule 342 you can have a discussion on this. You can give a proper notice.... (Interruptions) Why should we violate the Rules?

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour): That will be the burial of the whole thing.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order, please. I am in the hands of the House. I am only putting this thing. I shall abide by the decision of the House.... (Interruptions) Please sit down. I am on my legs. You have not heard me fully.

The rules are here to be observed. If it is the pleasure of the House that this Rule should be given a go-by now and questions may be allowed to be asked, which, I think, is not a very healthy thing.....

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Alipore): Have you gone through the other part of this morning's proceedings? Why was the time charged from 4.15 P.M. to 4 P.M.?.... (Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I will read out the proceedings. He said that, and the Speaker said:

“He will come at 4 O'clock. We adjourn for lunch now and reassemble at 2 P.M.”

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Previous to that?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Vajpayee said that as we would adjourn at 4.30, when would we get time to ask question? Then Mr. Banerjee said:

“You better accept our calling-attention notice.”

Then,

“MR. SPEAKER: Then, the Railway Minister should come at four O'clock. Will this be please conveyed to him?”

SHRI K. RAGHURAMAIAH: I shall do so.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: Kindly accept our calling attention notice.”

Then the Speaker said:

“If you like, I think, it is much better that I accept the Call Attention Notice and you have it tomorrow.”

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA said:

“You can accept the Call Attention and he can make the statement today; let questions be asked tomorrow.”

Then the Speaker said:

“He will come at 4 O'clock. We adjourn for lunch now to reassemble at 2 P.M.”

These are the whole proceedings.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur): The implication is this..

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: There is no question of implication. It is the rule. Rule 342 is there which gives you the right to raise a discussion on any statement made in the House.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: That is no-day-yet named motion.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: No motion will be admitted now.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: We have already given the Adjournment Motion. The Speaker wanted to hear the Minister. We have heard him. We would like the Adjournment Motion to be admitted. (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: One by one. I am concerned with the rules. Mr. Vajpayee's request is that the Adjournment Motion may be accepted. But that is for the Speaker to consider. I am concerned with whether questions can be permitted in violation of the rule or not.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: What is this violation, Sir? Some Members were saying, what about our Call Attention? That is why I made those observations. I do not and I did not want to exclude other Members, Sir.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSI (Calcutta South): We are somewhat confused about the issue.

Mr. Speaker suggested at the time of lunch that the Minister will make the statement at 4 O'clock. Mr. Banerjee said: Kindly accept our Calling Attention Notice. If it is accepted,—we can presume so,—then we have an opportunity tomorrow to know about the details. If it is not accepted, then, what is the use of having discussion? There is no time at the moment. It will be lost.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: Instead of Call Attention Notice, I am prepared for the Adjournment Motion standing in the name of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The rule should not be so sacrosanct, because six people have died. In the morning we received the telegram. Our union official has been arrested. Judicial enquiry should be instituted. For short-notice question, we are in the hands of the Minister concerned. Either Call Attention Motion or this Adjournment Motion.

SHRI SEZHIYAN (Kumbakonam): The Speaker was aware that we are going to adjourn at 4-3/ P.M. The statement was asked to be given at

4 O'clock. The House also should have some opportunity to discuss about the matter. If it was the intention to have the Call Attention tomorrow we need not ask the Minister to come at all at 4 O'clock. He could have made it at 4-20 or 4-25.

SHRI SURENDRA MOHANTY (Kendrapara): Sir, I am not standing on technical grounds, nor am I connected with the Union. I have emotional interest in this issue. The lives of six innocent people have been lost. As I have said, already, the Government of India is in a trigger-happy mood, and to provide safeguards to a mere official, six people have been shot dead. I appeal to you that there must be a full-length discussion over this, and this House must not exonerate this kind of trigger-happiness that is on the increase.

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेई : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, आज प्रातः स्पीकर साहब के सामने एजानमेंट मोशन थे, कालिग एटेंशन नोटिस थे और नियम 377 के अन्तर्गत भी कुछ कहने की इजाजत उन से मांगी गई थी। उस वक्त यह कहा गया था कि तथ्य सदन के सामने नहीं है। इस लिए वह मंत्री महोदय से कहेंगे कि वह इस बारे में वक्तव्य दें। हम ने समझा था कि हमें इसी समय प्रश्न पूछने की इजाजत दी जायेगी। यह वक्तव्य सुनने के बाद ऐसा लगता है कि जो कुछ जानकारी सरकार ने देनी थी, वह दे दी गई है और अब कोई नई जानकारी प्राप्त नहीं करनी है। लेकिन रेलवे कर्मचारियों पर गोली चली, उन की हत्या हुई। इस के लिए सरकार की निन्दा करने का अवसर हम चाहते हैं। और वह केवल एजानमेंट मोशन के जरिये हो सकता है।

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSI: There is a judicial inquiry already.

SHRI R. S. PANDEY (Rajnandgaon): The very idea of requesting

[Shri R. S. Pandey]

the Speaker to accept the calling-attention-notice was that while the Minister had been asked to make a statement giving whatever information he possessed, we should also be given an opportunity to give whatever information we were going to have or we already had. So, the calling-attention-notice has to be accepted.

SHRI HEMENDRA SINGH BANERA (Bhilwara): He should have resigned on this issue. *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I think the views of the House are very clear. The Members are exercised over this. Apart from the violation of the rules, I do not think that mere questions being asked now will satisfy the Members. Therefore, I would suggest that we leave this matter here and leave it to the Speaker to sort it out.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: We have been informed that the calling-attention-notice has been admitted.

SHRI JAGANNATHRAO JOSHI (Shajapur): In the calling-attention those whose names do not come up in the ballot cannot ask questions.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: All that hon. Members had stated has gone on record. All this would be placed before the Speaker, and he will take the decision, and I am sure that he will give the utmost consideration to all that has been stated. Now, let the matter stop there.

We have interrupted this debate on Andhra already, and I do not know whether it is proper to resume it, because that again would be irregular.

It has been announced that the House would adjourn at 4.30 P.M. If the House agrees, instead of at 4.30 P.M., we may adjourn now to meet again at 5 P.M.

16.18 hrs.

The Lok Sabha adjourned till Seventeen of the Clock.

The Lok Sabha re-assembled at Seventeen of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

GENERAL BUDGET 1973-74

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Finance Minister.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN): Sir, I rise to present the Revised Estimates for 1972-73 and the Budget Estimates for 1973-74.

2. The budget of the Central Government is not merely an exercise in balancing revenue and expenditure. Its primary role today is to be a major instrument for the realisation of our basic social and economic objectives. This Government is firmly committed to accelerated economic growth in a framework of greater social justice and self-reliance. The budget proposals which I shall present later in my speech are aimed at achieving these basic objectives. For a proper appreciation of these budget proposals in the broad context of the strategy for realising these objectives, it is necessary to bear in mind, as background, the state of the economy in 1972-73 and the economic prospects for 1973-74. The Economic Survey which was presented to Parliament a few days ago covers this territory fairly extensively. I shall, therefore, be brief in describing the salient features of the current economic situation.

Economic Conditions

3. With the return of refugees to their homeland and the emergence of Bangladesh as a friendly independent sovereign country, we had hoped that 1972-73 would be a year which we would devote our entire energy and resources to the unfinished task of economic and social reconstruction and development. We did certainly recognise from the beginning that 1973-74 was not going to be an easy year for the economy. In the course of my