

[Shri Sriballav Panigrahi]

done. As I have already said, all the party leaders should be consulted in this matter.

I have come to know that a committee has also been formed in this regard. The scope of that committee should be widened. It should be of more representative nature.

With these words I conclude.

15.04 hrs.

#### STATEMENT BY MINISTER

##### Bomb blast at Jalandhar

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MODH. MAQBOOL DAR) : Hon. Members had expressed their concern in this House on March 15th, 1997 regarding the bomb blast outside the Jalandhar City Railway Station on March 14th, 1997 which resulted in the death of seven persons and injury to twelve persons. As per report received from Punjab Government, a bomb blast took place in the parking lot of Jalandhar City Railway Station at about 13.05 hours on March 14, 1997. The bomb exploded a little after the Amritsar bound Shan-e-Punjab train had left the station and while the Flying Mail was approaching it. The bomb exploded at a place where seven to eight cycle rickshaws and a Gypsy Jeep of the Border Security Force were parked in front of the Railway Station. The explosion generated a lot of heat, suffocating smoke and nauseating smell. Six persons were killed as a result of the blast while thirteen were injured. One of the injured succumbed to his injuries in the hospital later.

DGP and other senior police officers rushed to the spot, made arrangements for transporting the injured persons to the hospital and cordoned off the blast site. A search of the area and the Railway Station was also carried out. Later in the evening, forensic experts from Chandigarh and Delhi reached Jalandhar to inspect the blast site and the dead bodies.

Preliminary investigations have revealed that the explosion was caused by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) which was being carried by one of the victims namely Kamlesh Chaudhary whose leg got severed in the blast. The material collected from the blast site revealed that the crude bomb was possibly housed in a 2 kg. ghee tin which was wrapped around with cotton undergarments. The tin box was in a bag which was held in the hand by Kamlesh Chaudhary. The crude bomb also had a large number of rivets and

iron nails which are commonly available. The casualties caused were mainly because of these rivets which worked as projectiles. The explosive material used appears to be Ammonium Nitrate or Potassium Chlorate which is a low grade explosive. However, this is being ascertained from the chemical analysis of the material found at the site.

The explosive and other material used in the IED, the *modus operandi* and the selection of blast site at Jalandhar points towards the possibility of involvement of the same subversive outfit which had earlier caused or tried to cause explosions at various places in Haryana, Delhi and Punjab. So far no militant outfit has claimed responsibility for the blast.

The security in the State has been beefed up. Passengers and vehicular traffic from Jammu and Kashmir is subjected to random checking. All public places like Railway Stations, cinemas, restaurants and places of religious gatherings are being covered.

Surprise and random checks of the trains coming in from Delhi or from Jammu and Kashmir are also being conducted. Night dominance operations have been launched throughout the State and senior officers move out in the field at night to check for any untoward incidents. Adequate security has been provided to the threatened persons and other sensitive installations in the State. The law and order situation is under constant watch and under control. Our security forces are maintaining strict vigil along the borders to prevent infiltration of militants and mercenaries and smuggling of arms and explosives from across the border.

The virtual rout of separatist elements in Punjab in the recently concluded Sikh Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee elections and subsequently in the State Assembly elections has completed the process of their marginalisation from the mainstream of public opinion in Punjab. As a result, there is demoralisation and desperation among the few remnants of separatist elements and their patrons based abroad who may select soft targets like this to show their existence and to malign the democratic process in the State which has been strengthened by recent elections.

Let me once again assure the House that by proper and coordinated action by all the concerned Central and State security agencies, perpetrators of such cowardly acts would be severely dealt with and not allowed to disrupt the peace and harmony that valiant people of Punjab have established after defeating the evil forces of terrorism and fundamentalism.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Has the Government thought of giving any monetary aid to the next of kin of the deceased personnel?

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI (Howrah) : Did they ask the Punjab Government to do something? Or, is it that they themselves would be doing something?

MR. CHAIRMAN : I recommend that the Government should give some monetary grant to the next of kin of the deceased personnel.

SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR : Sure, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Thank you.

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR (Mumbai North-West) : If the Punjab Government has done something, it should have been mentioned in the statement. The hon. Minister should also have clarified what the Central Government wants to do.

SARDAR SURJIT SINGH BARNALA (Sangrur) : The Punjab Government has already announced a relief of Rs. 1 lakh for each of the victims and the next of kin of the deceased.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA (Kottayam) : The Central Government can also give some money to the victims and the next of kin of the deceased.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : He has already assured us of that.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : He can give them double the money.

15.13 hrs.

STATUTORY RESOLUTION RE: DISAPPROVAL  
OF NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT APPELLATE  
AUTHORITY ORDINANCE - *Contd.*

AND

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT APPELLATE  
AUTHORITY BILL - *Contd.*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : The House will now resume discussion on the National Environment Appellate Authority Bill. Shri K.V. Surendra Nath.

SHRI K.V. SURENDRA NATH (Trivandrum) : Sir, I rise to support this Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I would request hon. Members to restrict their submission to ten minutes, if possible.

SHRI K.V. SURENDRA NATH : I will be as brief as possible.

I rise to support this Bill and welcome this important piece of legislation. There actually have been some lapses. In 1974, we effected a Constitution Amendment, which made it a duty and an obligation for Government and all the citizens of India to conserve, preserve and improve the environment. That was in 1974. Then, a spate of legislations came in and finally, in 1986, the

Environment Protection Act was enacted. That contains at least two provisions dealing with the same point as the present legislation now trying to deal with. Under Section 3(1) of the Act, the Government can, when the need arises, appoint an Authority, or by whatever other name it is called, to decide on the environmental problems. Section 5 gives the Government powers to issue orders on environmental problems to whoever it concerns. These were provided for in 1986.

We have taken about twelve years to propose this piece here on the creating of an Environment Appellate Authority. In the meantime, there have been a large number of issues including that relating to Kerala's Silent Valley, where after having a protracted struggle for ten years, we won the Silent Valley is now safe and protected.

There were several other cases. The affected people did not have a place to go to. They had to go to the civil courts, possibly to get a negative order. So, the sole resort for the aggrieved was to approach the courts, including the Supreme Court. What was to be the last resort become the first resort for the people who were affected by environmental problems. That is what has happened. The number of cases rose. There was no solution. Environmental Protection Act did have certain lacunae and deficiencies. It did not have the teeth. So, it was very difficult to use the Environmental Protection Act to solve all these problems. As one of the previous speakers said, an order was issued by the Supreme Court but in an entirely different context in Tamil Nadu. It has nothing to do with this. Anyway, this Bill is a very big thing and I welcome it. All these problems arose because the civil courts did not have a clear approach and direction to deal with these cases. As one of the hon. Members said now we will have a quasi judicial body which should take decision within a fixed time limit, that is, three months or at the most four months. This is a blessing. We should not negate the good impact this piece of legislation is going to make in the environmental sphere for its belatedness. The world is now concerned with environmental problems. Almost all the countries have enacted legislations several years back. Canada, a small country with two crores of population had brought a legislation ten years back. Almost all the other countries have done it. I do not know about Africa and Latin America. We in India are ten years late. But better late than never. This is what I have to say about this.

Now, a question arises regarding the counterpoising of development with environmental concerns. Positive development has to take care of the environmental problems. Environment and development should be integrated together. That is the only way to bring about what we call sustainable development. Without sustainable development, we would first be wasting our