

Title: Statement regarding bomb blasts in Jammu and Kashmir.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): Mr. Deputy-Speaker Sir, in deference to the wishes and the observation of the Chair during the day and also in deference to the sentiments and the concern of the hon. Members, I have to just inform about the sad incidents that occurred in Jammu and Kashmir today. Unfortunately this unpleasant task has fallen on my shoulders this time.

Three incidents took place in Srinagar today. The first incident was a grenade blast near the State Bank building on the Residency Road. But luckily and fortunately no harm was done and no loss of human life was there. The second blast which was also in the same vicinity, in the same place, was done after a short while. Perhaps it was so planned and so timed that they knew that the police and the people gather there and the Press would also reach the spot. That is why the second blast took place in which there was a loss of ten lives.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA (PONNANI): Were you not vigilant?

SHRI I.D. SWAMI: It is not a statement. This is just the information that is being passed on by me to the hon. Members in deference to the wishes and the observation of the Chair and the concern that the hon. Members had shown during the day. I am only informing the latest position as to what happened there and nothing else.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA (PONNANI): What about your vigilance?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Vigilance is different from what he has to inform the House. In the second blast what was the casualty?

SHRI I.D. SWAMI: In the second blast ten persons died and 25 others got injured.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA (PONNANI): That means you were not alert and the planning was not there.

SHRI VAIKO (SIVAKASI): Let the Minister complete his statement. First of all let us listen to the Minister.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: He has only been asked to report to the House. Then only you can seek clarification, if any. During the course of the day the Chair asked the Government to report to the House. That is what I am asking him to do now. Cross-examination is a different aspect.

SHRI I.D. SWAMI: I have already submitted that it was so timed earlier that after some time the second blast took place in which ten persons died and 25 others got injured. Unfortunately, a brilliant person in the journalistic world, Shri Pradeep Bhatia of *The Hindustan Times* also died in the incident. In addition, some more people, both civilians, Army and Police Officers also died. There was one local shopkeeper among the dead.

Among the seriously injured, there were Shri Pankaj Kumar Garg, IPS Officer of 1995 batch, the Superintendent of Police, East, and the DSP Shri Kuldip Singh. The Deputy Superintendent of Police and SHO, Shri Altaf Baksh of the same area Koti Bagh Police Station was also injured. The other injured persons include civilians, members of the Press as well as security forces.

In the third incident which also took place in Srinagar sometime afterwards, no toll was reported or no harm was done to the human beings. The third incident took place at Jahangir Chowk shortly after the second blast and there were no casualties.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA (PONNANI): Sir, please direct the Government to be very vigilant specially under the present situation. What condemnable things have happened over there! There seems to be a totally sterile inaction on the part of the Government. There is no realisation of the situation over there. He says that it was a planned attack.

SHRI I.D. SWAMI: Mr. Deputy-Speaker Sir, the Government was vigilant. The police reached the place immediately....(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Nothing will go on record.

(Interruptions) ... (Not recorded)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned to meet again tomorrow the 11th August 2000 at 11 a.m.

2255 hours

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock

on Friday, August 11, 2000/Sravana 20, 1922 (Saka).