

**Title: Request to remove the regional imbalances the North Bengal and also control the naxalite activities in the State.**

**SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (RAIGANJ):** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the House, and that of the hon. Minister of Planning, Shri Arun Shourie who is very much present here at the moment, to a very serious situation.

The Naxalite movement - known throughout the country as a political, revolutionary and militant movement - originated at a place called Naxalbari located just ten kilometres away from my constituency in North Bengal. The entire region of North Bengal is now suffocated on three issues. The activities of terrorist outfits operating from Bhutan, Nepal and also from Assam have made inroads into North Bengal to exploit the ethnic demand and the situation arising out of the local problems of people of a scheduled caste known as Rajbongshi.

One may recall the very serious situation that developed in Darjeeling hills when Shri Buta Singh was the Home Minister. When demand for a separate hill State was made, it was the wisdom of Rajiv Gandhi and Jyoti Basu that resolved the issue and brought peace there. For the last one year, particularly for the last six months, a serious situation has developed in North Bengal because of a total neglect of that region - neglect in infrastructure, neglect in industry, neglect in rural roads, neglect in flood management, and neglect in health. The foothills of Himalayas are now suffocating. The peace-loving people of this area have started thinking that if the ballot does not respond to their issues they would have to go to the bullet.

As public representatives we are trying to persuade them not to do so and we are urging the highest body for planning in the country, the Planning Commission, to ensure removal of regional imbalances. I met the Chief Minister of West Bengal twice personally. I wrote letters. I met the Prime Minister twice and gave a comprehensive note to him on this. I wrote several letters to the Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, Shri K.C. Pant, and drew the attention of the Minister to it. If the issue is brushed aside in a typical bureaucratic manner by calling it as a State matter, I am sure a day will come when the entire Parliament will be worried at the fate of that region. This is a gateway for the North-Eastern States. This is a gateway for Gangtok. This is a gateway for the bordering countries Nepal and Bangladesh. The situation is very serious there.

Sir, we, therefore, cutting across the party lines, request the hon. Minister of Planning to please advise his appropriate desk officers to talk to the local ethnic group, the Rajbansi involving the State Government -- I am not going into the controversy of their demand of language or dilact of language -- and resolve their problems.

Secondly, Sir, the serious imbalances created in the planned programme should be taken up together.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi, please understand that I have to complete 53 notices of 'Zero Hour' today.

**SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI :** Sir, I am concluding within two minutes.

The situation is very bad there. If we do not do anything now, I suspect, we might hear something bad in the next Session of Parliament, because I know the pulse. We all know, how the CPM activists had been killed in Jalpaiguri and a few others abducted. Even from the hospitals, patients had been abducted.

I, therefore, feel that the hon. Minister of Planning, involving the State Government, should immediately address this issue of regional imbalances to the entire North Bengal in the Ninth Plan. I think, this problem can be resolved within the framework of the ballot only, otherwise, things may move towards the direction of bullet. That is my only submission.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Is there anything to be said by the Government side?

**THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DISINVESTMENT, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION, AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE):** Sir, the subject which the hon. Member has raised is a very important one. He has, for many months to my personal knowledge, been in the forefront of raising this issue and drawing the attention of the Government as well as the Government of West Bengal to the serious problem.

Sir, I will just give you the factual position on this. As regards the terrorist violence which is seeping into

North Bengal, the Government – as you know, the Home Minister has clarified this many times -- has been engaged in the serious discussion with the Governments of Nepal and Bhutan because ULFA and other groups have been taking shelter there and are seeping in from there. I do not want to go much into this because it involves Intelligence information as well as the Ministry of External Affairs. But that matter is certainly being taken into account.

Sir, the second point to which the hon. Member had drawn attention is the serious regional imbalances that has been created. It is a sad thing for me to report. He had written letters also about the arsenic poisoning and other things in North Bengal. On each occasion, I had personally written to the hon. Chief Minister of West Bengal, and I am very sad to report, Sir, that I have not even had the courtesy of an acknowledgement from anybody in the West Bengal Government to those letters.â€ (Interruptions)

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (HOOGLY): This is unacceptable because the hon. Home Minister...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Rupchand Pal, let him complete the reply.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL : We know how this Government has deprived the State of West Bengal in regard to assistance...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Rupchand Pal, let the hon. Minister complete his reply.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Anil Basu, take your seat.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will go on record except the reply of the hon. Minister.

(Interruptions) \*

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE: Sir, we had a meeting of all the MPs of West Bengal in Calcutta recently where the hon. Member and others had drawn the attention... (Interruptions)â€ When I had gone there, the hon. Member and other Members had drawn the attention to the same problems of North Bengal. We had all the officers of the area also there, and the senior officers of the Government from the Secretariat as well as Collectors of the areas said that they would attend to these problems.

Again, Sir, I am very sorry to report that in spite of reminders, what they were supposed to send us by way of information and the steps which they were to take, has not come. But I personally assure the hon. Member that I will again pursue this matter immediately and take all possible steps.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY (CALCUTTA NORTH WEST): Is the Central Government thinking about the master plan?

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE: I am coming to that...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: When the hon. Minister is giving his reply, you are not hearing anything. What is this?

...(Interruptions)

\* Not Recorded.

SHRI ANIL BASU (ARAMBAGH): They have not allocated even a single paisa...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: When the hon. Minister is ready to reply, you are not hearing anything. This is the problem.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: If this is the case, I do not want any Minister to be present in the House during 'Zero Hour'.

...(Interruptions)

**SHRI ANIL BASU :** They want to disturb North Bengal at the time of elections. ...(*Interruptions*)

**MR. SPEAKER:** The same hon. Members who sometimes ask for hon. Ministers to be called to the House do not want to hear what the Minister says.

...(*Interruptions*)

**SHRI ARUN SHOURIE:** Sir, under Articles 29 and 30 of the Constitution every group has the fullest right to maintain its cultural and linguistic identity. ...(*Interruptions*)

**MR. SPEAKER:** Nothing should go on record except what the hon. Minister says.

(*Interruptions*)\*

**SHRI ARUN SHOURIE:** For that purpose, I personally assure the hon. Member that I will take it up with the Planning Commission. I will get back to him with a concerted plan on what could be done for the development of that area. ...(*Interruptions*)