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Title : Made a statement on incidents of violence which affected the life and traffic in Assam and the steps being taken by Government to bring the situation under control.

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the recent incidents of violence have affected the life, and traffic in certain parts of Assam. This was raised yesterday by some of the Members in the House and some mention has been made today to a different aspect. I would like to present before the House the facts of these incidents and the present situation as it prevails. I would also mention the steps being taken by Government to bring the situation under control.

One Railway Bridge and two roads on NH 31 and 31C were damaged on June 2, 1998 by suspected Bodo Liberation Tiger (BLT) militants in separate incidents of blasts disrupting rail/road traffic. The Railway Bridge on broad gauge line near Gossaigaon in Kokrajhar district was damaged due to one of the blasts. Another bridge over river Bokro in Bongaigaon district was damaged on NH 31. Yet another bridge was damaged on Tihu River on NH 31 at Nathkuchi in Nalbari district. Though another crude bomb was exploded on the bridge on NH 52 at Powraputa in Darrang district in the night of June 2, 1998, no damage was caused. On the night of June 4-5, 1998, another culvert on NH 31 at Maiwatari in Dhubri district was partially damaged in bomb blast by suspected BLT militants.

The Central Government has been keeping a close watch over the situation and has been in regular touch with the State Government. Emergent repairs were carried out on the damaged Rail Bridge and the train services have been resumed. However, full restoration of train services would be possible in a day or so.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): It has already been done. ... -.

[English]

SHRI L.K. ADVANI : The Minister of Railways - informs me that it has been done.

Army has been asked to undertake construction of Bailey bridge over River Bokro between Bongaigaon and Kokrajhar. The traffic through the bridge in Nathkuchi, Naibari is being diverted through a nearby old bridge, which can be used till the reconstruction of damaged RCC bridge. The restoration work on the culvert in Dhubri district, which was blown off last night, has started.

Security of rail and road bridges, rail tracks have been tightened and intensive patrolling and static guard arrangements have been made both on the North and South bank of Brahmaputra. Around 30 persons have been arrested in connection with the blasts. Government is closely monitoring the situation.

Ethnic tension cropped up in Kokrajhar district of Assam due to Bodo-Santhal violence. Various steps have been taken to bring the deteriorating law and order situation in Assam particularly in the Bodo areas under control. Additional units of para military forces and Army have been inducted in areas affected. 18 relief camps have been opened for providing shelter to those displaced in this violence. The State Government has also announced payment of Rs. 1 lakh to the next of kin of each deceased and Rs. 10,000/- to each of those whose houses have been burnt down.

The Central Government has also restarted the process of dialogue with moderate Bodo groups to resolve the various outstanding issues so that normalcy is restored. The Government is hopeful that through this process of taking strict action against the law breakers and dialogue with political groups in Bodo areas, normalcy can be restored in this area.

SHRI BHUBANESWAR KALITA (GUWAHATI) : This is a very important issue. I want a discussion on this subject in this House....
(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : There should be no clarification on the statement. Please understand this. Shri Sultanpuri to speak.

(Interruptions)

SHRI BHUBANESWAR KALITA : We want a discussion on this issue.... (Interruptions)

[Translation]