

the Parliament, we have vied with each other in apportioning blame, never pausing to introspect, deriving a sort of satisfaction of scoring a debating point over each other. Sir, hile we have been basking in this complacency, Punjab has inexorably been sliding fathoms in an ocean of chaos.

I was sorry that today the hon. Member, Mr. Khurana, who initiated the debate, though dwelt at length on the economic ills of Punjab, yet when it came to the political part, he again launched a diatribe against the Congress. I want to avoid doing the same but to set the records straight, I want to remind him that it is the Congress which has always sought others' cooperation. He referred to the Rajiv Gandhi-Longowal Accord. The then Congress President, Shri Rajiv Gandhi, signed the Accord. It was a bold historic decision. Exceptionally peaceful elections followed that because at that time Rajiv Gandhi had said that what mattered for the Congress was not a momentary or a transitional victory in one election but what mattered for the Congress was that the light of democracy keeps alive in the country.

Sir, Akali Dal came to power. We know what happened. It failed to rise to the occasion, it failed to size up to responsibilities of the Government. It was rocked by the internal dissensions and there was a vertical split. After the split, we still endeavoured to give support to Shri Barnala. Yes, we referred to his Government in the Presidential Address.

17.00 hrs.

We went all out to support the Government. But the Government lacked the political will to fight terrorism. I do not want to repeat what we have been saying in the past. But since that subject was touched, I will make a reference to it. Some ministers in the Barnala Government started courting terrorists. There was a reign of terror let loose once again in the State. A wonderful opportunity that was provided to us in the form of elections was missed. Why they have faulted is again history. The party of Shri Khurana

had been exchanging views and notes with the Government. We know as to what reasons and what internal contradictions, deficiencies and weaknesses were there in Barnala Government which led to the non-fulfilment of the Award.

The Centre, because of the failings of the Barnala Government, had to take action in the form of an unpleasant and difficult decision to promulgate the President's rule. The results that flowed from that action were again before us. All religious places including the Golden Temple at Amritsar, the *sanctum sanctorium* of the sikh faith which were defiled and desecrated by irreligious use, were freed of impious elements.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member, you please continue after the statement of the Home Minister. Now the Home Minister will make a statement regarding the induction of Army in aid to civil authorities in certain districts of Assam.

17.02 hrs.

#### STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Induction of Army in aid to civil authorities in certain districts of Assam

[English]

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI. S.B. CHAVAN): I wish to apprise the Hon'ble Members of the House that at the request of the Government of Assam, the Army is providing aid to civil authorities in certain districts of the State.

It may be recalled that President's Rule was imposed in the State of Assam on 27.11.1990 and the State Assembly was dissolved. After the dissolution of the ninth Lok Sabha, elections were held to the Parliament in the State of Assam as elsewhere in the country. Simultaneously, elections were also held to the State Assembly and with the constitution of the new State Assembly, a

[Sh. S.B. Chavan]

popular Government with Shri Hiteswar Saikia as Chief Minister assumed office on 30.6.1991. The very next day, the ULFA kidnapped 14 persons serving the Central and State Governments and the ONGC including a Russian Mining Engineer.

This incident of kidnapping was followed by an escalation in the violent activities such as extortion, kidnapping, assault and murder. The State Government made every effort to secure the release of the kidnapped persons and even released about 500 ULFA activists detained under the TADA. Despite this generous gesture on the part of the State Government, the ULFA continued to increase the demand and pressed for the release of several detenus who were facing very serious charges. The Chief Minister had all the time been making efforts to secure the release of the hostages. Shri Bipul Mahanta, former President of the Assam Yuba Chatra Parishad and self-proclaimed Convenor of the Amnesty International who mediated on this issue, was killed by the ULFA. They also killed Shri T.S. Raju, Assistant Executive Engineer of the ONGC displaying utter disregard to human life. Earlier, they had killed the Russian Mining Engineer who was one of the 14 kidnapped persons.

The Government of Assam felt that the situation had become very grave. They felt that a larger induction of forces was necessary to deal with the situation and, therefore, to control the situation, bring confidence to people and to restore law and order, the State Government requisitioned Army in aid to civil authorities to operate against the ULFA extremists in the following districts:-

- (1) Jorhat
- (2) Dibrugarh
- (3) Tinsukia
- (4) Sibsagar

- (5) Nagaon
- (6) Sonitpur
- (7) Golaghat
- (8) Dhemaji
- (9) North Lakhimpur

The State Government informed the Central Government through two wireless messages dated 5.9.91 that requisition had already been sent to the Sub-area Commander for Army help in aid to civil authorities in the above districts. The Chief Minister, through his letter dated the 8th September, 1991 addressed to me, requested that instructions may be issued for immediate deployment of Army in aid to civil authorities. I discussed the situation in Assam with all the MPs from Assam individually and collectively.

It was decided to accept the request of the Government and the Chief Minister of Assam to provide assistance of Army in aid of civil authorities in the specified districts of Assam. The Army has, accordingly, moved in Assam in the above districts and has started to assist in operations against the ULFA.

The Chief Minister has referred to the links of the ULFA with Bangladesh, Pakistan and China. He has informed me that his reference is based on the interrogation of some of the ULFA activists and some documents recovered from them. These countries have denied any such involvement.

The Govt. of India are deeply concerned about the continued detention of three officers of Assam Government including and IAS officer and four ONGC officers. I trust that they will be released soon and normalcy in the State will be restored early to enable us to withdraw the Army.