

Our party, CPI, are proud to state that with whatever small strength we have got in Punjab, we have been trying to fight extremism and encouraging national integration and we will continue to support the Government whenever it takes proper steps. The entire nation will support the Government if the Government takes proper steps.

Whatever be the attempts of the extremists, the country will remain united and there would be no 'khalistan'. The Sikhs will be with us; the entire Punjab within India will prosper with us. But as I said, Government must take steps in the right direction.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI RAJIV GANDHI): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would first like to offer our condolences to the people who have suffered during these last few days at the hands of the extremists or terrorists, whatever we would like to call them. We, all of us, view this extremely seriously. It is a new development, a new level of functioning, of operation by the extremists and it is to be taken very seriously. But still, it is sad that on an occasion that is so serious for the whole country, the opposition did not even have fifty people present in the House. It shows the importance they give to such issues. By and large from what people have said in this House, there is no difference in the mood of the House and in the feelings that are being expressed and this is one issue where the Opposition and the Government will be one to eliminate terrorism and extremism from this country.

The Home Minister will be answering this debate and I do not want to get into his territory. I am sure he will answer many of the questions that have been raised, the action that has been taken, the results that have been achieved, the special teams that he has set up, the arrests that he has made, whatever he has learnt about the particular devices and where they were made and so on. I do not know if he

could put all the information he has in front of the House today, but in case he has to hold back some for reasons of investigation or further follow-up action, I am sure he will be giving the House full facts as soon as he is able to do so without prejudice to the case.

One member has raised the question whether Government or the Delhi Administration and the other Administrations reacted fast enough to build public awareness that such booby traps were being placed and that there was a danger to people from those devices. I think the Administration did act fast enough because, although many devices went off, we have also got a large number of devices which the people recognised as booby traps after the publicity and they have been taken in tact. That is what is actually helping the investigations. So, this was not a shortcoming on the part of the Administration. In fact, they have to be commended on the speed with which this information could be spread and a large number of explosions of these booby traps were prevented from going off.

Members are justifiably apprehensive about the speed at which we are able to catch the terrorists. We have certain constraints and certain drawbacks. We have certain limitations by the laws that are available to us. And tomorrow, may be day after, we will be bringing some amendments to this House and we are looking into what we can do to counter terrorism as such. Are our laws good enough to handle terrorism? If they are not, we will bring in a Bill before the House to fight terrorism.

One member mentioned that we should have a Minister for Internal Security. I beg to state, Sir, that we do have one.

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER: It is better, you have removed the doubt.

[English]

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : They thought that he was in charge of Insecurity.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir, we have been trying to get to the root of the problem that is there in Punjab. What we really have to fight is not the political aspect of it. That is where we must adjust and accommodate always, within the constraints of a united and integral India—that is where we must be flexible. But at the same time, we must be very rigid where there is any question of using violence towards those ends, where there is any question of using terrorism towards those ends, where there is any question of threat to our national unity or integrity and where there is a question of a fraction breaking away. There, we will be tough and we hope the whole House will stand with us, in taking both these lines simultaneously.

Sir, one party is talking about water, Chandigarh and territory.

But maybe, what they are really talking about is the whole territory of Punjab—how to sit in the Chief Minister's chair, while there is another group which is talking about the same territory in a different way ; about taking it away. We must fight the second group with everything that we have with us ; and we will do that.

Prof. Dandavate raised some points which, I think, need a little explanation. I do not want to go into the full details of what has happened in the last three years, because we all know that ; we have debated it a number of times. Most of the charges that he has made, have been answered more than fully on the floor of this very House. It is no use going into these again and again.

He did raise a point of arms being smuggled into the Golden Temple complex in food—well, he said food

trucks. But if I remember correctly, it was in food trucks ; but it was also inside bags of wheat, and bags of food I would like to point out that these trucks belonged to the SGPC, that these trucks were given specific clearances to go in and out by the SGPC at that time. SGPC has not charged much since then. So, although we all want to accommodate as much as possible, there are certain things we must keep in mind. We cannot forget that these actions could not have taken place without the full help of the SGPC. If people had gone into the Golden Temple, they were sitting inside the Akal Takht, they were sitting there because they had the permission of the management to go into that.

Now, there is one more small point. Prof. Dandavate Ji said : maybe, we can have a metal detector through which the whole truck can go. I would like to remind him that the trucks are made of metal. So, they would be detected.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : I said electronic equipment, and metal detector for us ; and for them, electronic equipment.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Like I said earlier, one of the Members said that all the Akali leaders are not the same. All the Sikhs are not the same. All Sikhs are not Akalis ; all Akali Dal people are not extremists. This is true, and we know it. But Members have said that.

Prof. Dandavate Ji has read out a letter written by Shri Badal which, he said, was not a love letter. Maybe, some day he will read out one of his other letters. (*Interruptions*)

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : If it were a love letter, I would not have read it here.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I said : maybe, some other day he will read out one of his other letters,

MR. SPEAKER : Do you expect me to allow that, Sir ?

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Not knowing his letters, I could not comment on this.

But I think this is a very important juncture for all of us ; and like many Members have said, members of the Akali Dal have come out openly, may be for the first time as strongly as they have. I think this is very positive ; and not only the Akali Dal, but also for the first time we have seen a large number of Sikhs coming out and condemning these actions, and I must congratulate our Sikh brothers and sisters for coming out or only against this action, for showing courage and guts—because they will, at some stage, have to face the terrorists as well ; and the whole House must congratulate all the Sikhs who have shown the guts and come forward and stood up against this. This is where we must rise above what we instinctively want to do, or feel that should be done. We must help them come out of their shelves. We have a choice today. We have a choice of countering a small group of extremists and terrorists and carrying the rest of the Sikhs in India with us. When I say 'with us', I do not mean the Government, I mean the House, the country. And we could very easily go wrong, a small false move, small error in our discretion or hastiness in our action could turn the whole group against all of us. And that is where we need to act with utmost restraint and utmost patience and really we are talking of what Gandhiji taught us right, non-violence to the ultimate degree. Let them provoke us. But like previous times, again many Members pointed out every time a discussion started, every time it started moving towards conclusions, and things started going well, something happened. We all reacted against that provocation. What was the result of that ? It was that whatever procedures had been started were abandoned. Now, we have to

show the guts to follow through with the action that we have started and we have to have the guts to bring out a conclusion and isolate the extremists from everybody else in this country. To do this we will need the help of every single person. And this is the time when Members in the Opposition specially leaders in the Opposition must not turn this into a political battle with the Government or against any party. It is too easy to do that. It is the easy way out.

PROF. MADHU DANAVATE : But do you find it that way ? Did you find the battle like that here ?

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I will come to that. I answer Prof. Dandavateji No, it has not taken place in this House. But I was going to come a little later to it in the debate, namely what is said must also be followed by actions. When immediately a *bandh* is called when immediately public action is taken, that is what is damaging, and that is what we must always be careful about. I am not trying to accuse because it would not be good to accuse anyone. We have to convince everyone who has any doubts, about the line of action that we are taking. It is in fact the only correct line of action, and there is no real alternative.

We have seen today, the leaders of the Akali Dal the traditional leaders of the Akali Dal, have taken a stand to an extent. May be we all wanted that they would have taken much stronger steps. But let us not forget, that just a few days ago they could not even have taken this much of stand. We must see the positive side and see how we help them build themselves up without helping in such a manner that we damage them permanently, but help them by our actions by not reacting, to what the extremists and terrorists want to see us react. They have wanted, right along, that a backlash comes and the whole community is alienated from the country. That is what we want to avoid here today.

[Shri Rajiv Gandhi]

It is also nice to hear from the Opposition Benches of a "foreign hand" involvement in these terrorist activities. But I would like to remind them that whenever the Treasury Benches have raised this issue they have come out very strongly and sarcastically about this. But the fact is that there is an involvement. You know it, and it does not help ignoring it. At the same time, it does not help giving it too much importance and pretending that it is the only problem. That is a much wider problem than that and we have to see it in all its aspects. One of our Members said that the Punjab was leaderless. I beg to differ with him. The Akali Dal might be having leadership problems, but I do not think, the Punjab is having any leadership problem. Another Member mentioned about the Akal Takht being broken down. I beg to say that this is entirely the business of the Sikhs and we should not interfere in what they want to do with their religious institutions. If they want to remove it, they are welcome to remove it. If they want to build a 24-storey structure, they are welcome to do it provided it is within the Municipal Committee rules there. So, they can do whatever they like to do.

The fact is that today there is no room for complacency. We have been facing terrorism in our country for the first time for the past two or three years. Last week, it has taken a new turn, a more serious turn. It was limited to young boys with guns or machine-guns going and gunning down people. Where they were or they could be spotted and they could be caught. This is a different type. It is laying booby-traps for the people to pick up, where it is not so easy to spot the person who is doing that. Wherever terrorism has come up in this manner, in whichever country it has come up, they have not been able to eliminate it in a very short period of time. It

has always lasted quite some time before they have been able to finish it off. And we must brave ourselves to face such a situation. We must build up our machinery whether it is intelligence, whether it is police, whether it is administrative, or some civil defence type structure, and create an awareness in the public, use voluntary organisations, use all our political organisations to try and identify where things are going wrong and where unusual objects are placed. There should be awareness. People should not go and grab things and pick them up and get themselves killed. This is something which we must think about and do something about it.

Terrorism comes up when there is a certain weakness. We must overcome this weakness. Our previous Prime Minister, Indiraji, had warned our friends in the Akali Dal that they must be very careful how they take their agitation. On the floor of this House, if I remember correctly, she said : "If you start going down a road from which you cannot turn, it is extremely dangerous." That is why, we must see that the statements and actions taken by us are not such that they help terrorists and extremists.

Although the Akali leadership have been positive in certain aspects, they have also during the recent past said and done things which have encouraged extremists and terrorists. They must stop doing that. Not just saying it ; they must stop saying it and they must also stop doing it. And here I would like our friends in the opposition, who know them well, to talk to them and convince them that if we have to fight these terrorists and extremists, we must all fight them together.

The terrorists will always have an advantage in such a situation. They choose their time, they choose their place. Today it is transistor radios, tomorrow it might be something else which might not be recognisable. We

have to penetrate and got to the roots of it. We have to really flush them out.

I am sure, the Home Minister has already taken strong steps and he will be taking stronger steps to see that this cancer is taken out from our society. This is the time for all of us to mobilise public opinion, not just one community but all communities, all regions, all religions, to fight this. Killings, such as these, leave scar on our democracy, and we must put an end to them. Violence has no place in our society. The integrity, and unity of India is supreme and we will not let anything happen that will affect it.

Lastly, we are all privileged to have been born in India, Gandhi Ji's, Pandit Ji's India, where they had faced British bullets, lathi charges, totally non-violently. It needs much more guts and courage to be non-violent than it takes to be violent, and the recent acts that we have seen are not acts of courage, they are acts of cowardice, and we must fight them with all the strength at our command. Thank you, Sir.

SHRIMATI DIL KUMARI BHAN-
DARI (Sikkim) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, most heinous crime has been committed by the perpetrators of these bomb blasts in Delhi and in parts of northern India, resulting in loss of many innocent lives and injuring lots of people. No words are strong enough to condemn this heinous crime. These acts have been committed at such a time when every citizen in our country was waiting for some positive response from the Akali Dal towards the recent steps taken by the Centre to solve the Punjab problem. This clearly shows that the path of persuasion has had no effect on these anti-national forces. So, I think the Government should come on these dark forces with a heavy hand and these forces should be rooted out once and for all. The situation is such that at this juncture, every citizen

should stand behind the Government for any action it takes to defeat these dark forces who are out to disintegrate our country. On behalf of Sikkim Sangram Parishad, I would like to extend our support to the Government and the Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi, for any action they take to eliminate these anti-national and dark forces. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER : Shrimati Krishna Sahi.

SHRIMATI KRISHNA SAHI (Begu-
sara) : I am running temperature, Sir, so I am going.

MR. SPEAKER : Shall I ask the Home Minister right away.

SOME HON. MEMBERS : No, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER : Then I will call Shri K. D. Sultanpuri.

15.00 hrs.

[Translation]

SHRI K. D. SULTANPURI (Simla) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Hon. Prime Minister has explained in detail the position about Punjab. I would like to say only one thing. The extremists who initially started their activities in Punjab are now spreading them all over the country. Religious places in Punjab are not being utilised for the purpose they are meant for. I would like to say that the sanctity of all the Gurudwaras in Punjab is being violated and I would like to request the Hon. Prime Minister to take stringent measures in this regard. You will have to take strong steps in order to set the things right.

I came from Himachal Pradesh yesterday night. Efforts are being made to create disturbances in every Gurudwara of Himachal Pradesh. I would like to make a mention about,