

12.11 hrs.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY SPEAKER
RE : NOTICES RECEIVED FROM
DEPUTY REGISTRAR, BOMBAY
HIGH COURT

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I have to inform the House that on 11th July, 1988, two notices were received from the Deputy Registrar, High Court, Appellate Side, Bombay, requiring my appearance before the Bombay High Court on 19th July, 1988, for filing of an affidavit by me or the Secretary-General, Lok Sabha, within three weeks from 28th June, 1988, in connection with two writ petitions No. 6157/87 and 1299/88 alleging that there was "a variance between the bill (The Central Excise Tariff Bill, 1985), as passed and gazetted with regard to the rate of the excise duty on the goods—cranes—Chapter sub-heading No. 8426-00".

As per well established practice and convention of Lok Sabha, I have decided not to respond to the notices. I have passed on the relevant papers to the Minister of Law and Justice for taking such action as he may deem fit to apprise the court of the correct constitutional position and the well established conventions of the House.

12.12 hrs.

RESIGNATION BY MEMBER

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I have to inform the House that I received a letter dated 29th June, 1988 from Shri Arjun Singh, an elected member from South Delhi constituency of Delhi, resigning his seat in Lok Sabha. I have accepted his resignation with effect from the 29th June, 1988.

(Interruptions)

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMEN-
TARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
(SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT) : There must be

some sanctity. Will you please let anybody else speak? I want to state the Government's position. (Interruptions)

Mr. Acharia, will you let me speak? I am not disputing any Member's right to give adjournment motion. But there must be some sanctity. All of us met yesterday and it was agreed that this could be discussed under rule 193. (Interruptions)

There must be some sanctity about meeting the Speaker and agreeing to a thing. You agreed to a discussion under 193 and now you are going back. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Madhavrao Scindia.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing goes on record without my permission. I have called Mr. Madhavrao Scindia.

12.15 hrs.

STATEMENT RE : ACCIDENT TO 26
DN BANGALORE-TRIVANDRUM
EXPRESS BETWEEN SASTHAN-
KOTTA AND PERINAD STATIONS
OF SOUTHERN RAILWAY

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI
MADHAVRAO SCINDIA) : I deeply
regret to apprise the House of an unfor-
tunate train accident involving 26 Dn.
Bangalore-Trivandrum Express at about
12.59 hrs. on 8-7-88 between Sasthankotta
and Perinad stations of the Trivandrum
Division of Southern Railway.

As a result of the accident 10 out of a
total of 14 coaches of the train derailed and
capsized at bridge No. 19 on Ashtamudi
Lake. Of these, 2 coaches remained suspen-
ded from the bridge, 4 got submerged and
the remaining 4 were partially submerged in
the lake below.

The train engine and the coach next to
it came to a stop after passing the bridge in
a derailed condition. The 12th coach also

derailed and the last 2 coaches remained on the track.

In this tragic accident, 105 persons lost their lives, 51 sustained grievous injuries and 150 sustained simple injuries.

Immediately on receiving information, the Station Master of Perinad Railway Station informed the Railway Control Office at Trivandrum at about 13.10 hrs. Railway Medical Van was immediately ordered from Quilon and it left with a doctor and an Assistant Engineer at 13.35 hrs., reaching the site at 13.55 hrs. Accident Relief Trains were also ordered from other locations on the Southern Railway including Trivandrum.

The local population, particularly a large number of fishermen, rendered spontaneous help and assisted in rescuing a number of passengers for which we are extremely grateful.

The local civil administration, Quilon also responded promptly and rendered most valuable assistance. Meanwhile, Naval authorities at Delhi were contacted and they alerted their base at Cochin to provide all possible help. We highly appreciate the assistance rendered by the local civil administration and the Naval authorities.

The General Manager, Southern Railway rushed to the site from Mangalore. Divisional Railway Manager, Trivandrum along with his officers and staff rushed to the site from Trivandrum and reached there by 16.05 hrs.

Member Engineering, Railway Board, who was at Madras along with senior officers of Southern Railway flew to the site of accident. Member Mechanical, Railway Board also proceeded to the site by air from Delhi.

Shri Moti Lal Vora Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare accompanied by the Director General of Health Services air dashed to the site with life saving drugs. Shri M.M. Jacob, Union Minister of State in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Shri C.K. Jaffer Sherief, Union Minister of State in the Department of Coal in the Ministry of Energy and the Chief Minister, Kerala also visited the site.

I along with Chairman, Railway Board flew to the site of the accident of the 8th evening. Shri S. Krishna Kumar, Union Minister of State in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, who is also M.P. of that area accompanied me. After visiting the site, we went to the hospitals at Quilon and Trivandrum to see the injured.

I have already announced an enhanced amount of ex-gratia relief of Rs. 10,000/- each to the next of the kin of the identified dead against the normal amount of Rs. 5,000/- each and Rs. 2,000/- each to the grievously injured and Rs. 500/- each to those with simple injuries. This is in addition to the compensation payable to the injured and the next of the kin of the deceased. The Kerala Government has been approached to nominate an ad hoc Claims Commissioner for this purpose.

The Prime Minister has also announced relief of Rs. 30 lakhs for the victims of the accident from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund.

The Commissioner of Railway Safety, Southern Circle has already commenced his statutory inquiry.

I and my colleague Shri Mahabir Prasad and all the railway men and women extend our deep condolences to the kith and kin of those who lost their lives in this tragic accident and sincere sympathies to the injured. I am sure that the House joins us in extending heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families.

(Interruptions)

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : This is irregular. *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : There is no question of irregularity. I have done it completely according to the rules. I would not budge an inch. No. Nothing doing.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I have already disallowed the Adjournment Motion. Now, Mr. Narayanan.

(Interruptions)

12.16 hrs.

At this stage, Prof. Madhu Dandavate and some other hon. Members left the House.