

12.05 hrs

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Now the Prime Minister will make a statement.

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER

RAM JANMA BHOOMI- BABRI MASJID DISPUTE

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO): The Ram Janma Bhoomi- Babri Masjid dispute has been agitating the minds of all those who believe in the values of secularism and governance based upon Constitutional principles. During the last few weeks, the developments at Ram Janma Bhoomi-Babri Masjid complex have been unfolding rapidly. The order of the Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court dated 15 July was a water-shed in the series of recent developments. The High Court, in its interim order, restrained the parties from undertaking or continuing any construction activity on the 2.77 acres of land which had been notified by the Government of Uttar Pradesh for acquisition. The Court also directed that if it was necessary to do any construction on the land, prior permission from the Court would be obtained.

While the Government of Uttar Pradesh repeatedly assured the Government of India as also the National Integration Council that they would undertake to have the orders of the High Court implemented, the construction activity at the Ram Janma Bhoomi-Babri Masjid complex continued.

The non-implementation of the High Court orders created misgivings among the people. This matter came up for consideration before the Supreme Court in a writ petition. During the hearing of the petition on 22 July 1992, the Supreme Court called for suspension of the construction work of any kind on the acquired land.

In a further affidavit filed by the Government of Uttar Pradesh in the Supreme Court

on 23 July 1992, the State Government unconditionally undertook to obey the orders passed by the Supreme Court and by the Allahabad High Court. It was further mentioned in the affidavit that the suggestions made by the Supreme Court at the time of the hearing on 22 July 1992 had given a new dimension to the negotiations which had been going on between the State Government and the religious leaders. The Government of Uttar Pradesh assured the Supreme Court that the State Government was using all means at its command to ensure that an agreement is reached by all parties concerned so that the orders of the Court are effectively implemented. The affidavit, *inter-alia*, referred to the invitation given by me to the leaders of the religious groups to meet me for discussion on 23 July 1992.

In the light of the submissions made by the Government of Uttar Pradesh, the Supreme Court adjourned the hearing of the petition to Monday, 27 July 1992. The Supreme Court said, *inter-alia*, that exploring a solution to this problem is in the larger national interest.

I am sure all the right thinking people will share the concern of the Central Government to find an amicable solution of the problem. The Central Government believes that all avenues of amicable settlement must be sincerely explored in the first instance. Our effort, therefore, has been to defuse the situation, avoid a confrontationist approach, and to bring about reconciliation of views of various concerned parties. While doing so, we have been acutely conscious of the importance of upholding the dignity of the judiciary and respect for the rule of law. It was on this basis that we had repeatedly urged the Government of Uttar Pradesh and all other concerned parties to abide by the directions of the Court, both in letter and spirit, and not to do anything which will undermine the basic principles of the Constitution.

As was stated in the Congress manifesto, we are committed to finding a negotiated settlement of this issue which fully re-

spects the sentiments, of both communities involved. If such a settlement cannot be reached, all parties must respect the order and verdict of the Court. The Congress is for the construction of the Temple without dismantling the Mosque.

It was the responsibility of the Government of Uttar Pradesh to ensure that the orders of the Court are implemented and the construction activity on the acquired land is stopped. However, the situation was allowed to escalate to a point where the State Government expressed its inability to do anything and in fact requested that either the Home Minister or I should persuade the Sants and Mahants to stop the work. In view of the critical situation which had come about at Ayodhya, I had a meeting with the religious leaders on 23 July 1992. During the discussion, I drew the attention of the delegation to the serious situation created by the non-compliance of the Court orders by the Government of Uttar Pradesh. I also informed the delegation that I would be in a position to begin the process of dialogue only after the construction activity comes to a halt. Finally, I requested the religious leaders to see that the work is stopped so that efforts to solve the Ram Janma Bhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute etc. could thereafter be proceed with, in a time-bound manner. I also told them that once the work is stopped, I would revive the efforts initiated by the previous Government that had remained unfinished, plus the preliminary soundings I have been making for some time past. The purpose of this exercise is to bring about an amicable settlement through negotiations. In case it becomes necessary, the litigation pending in various Courts on the subject could be consolidated and considered by one judicial authority, whose decision will be binding on all parties. This would require a fairly elaborate exercise at Government level and appropriate submissions to the Courts for their consideration. I expressed my belief that this exercise at Government level could be expedited and completed within 4 months' time. I found agreement on this approach.

The construction activity on the acquired

land at the Ram Janma Bhoomi—Babri Masjid complex is reported to have ceased on 26 July. I hope this will pave the way for arriving at an agreed solution of the problem and bring about an amicable settlement of this long-standing issues. I therefore appeal to all political parties and all sections of the people to help in strengthening the traditional values of religious tolerance and in maintaining peace, tranquility and communal harmony.

[English]

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Midnapore): Will the House be given any opportunity at any time to discuss the statement or ask for clarifications?

MR. SPEAKER: I think if the Members of this House desire, we can have the discussion tomorrow at 12 O' Clock. You can ask the questions tomorrow at 12 O'Clock.

SHRI EBRAHIM SULAIMAN SAIT (Ponnani): Not desire to have discussion, but clarifications.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, we can have them tomorrow at 12 O' Clock.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH (Aonla): Mr. Speaker.....[Interruptions]

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: For once we can dispense with it.

[Interruptions]

[Translation]

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, The Diploma Institute of Tourism Department is being shifted to Gwalior. The Parliamentary Affairs Minister had assured us to discuss this matter in the House. But neither any action has been taken on it so far

nor any answer has been given to the House. This is against your ruling. [Interruptions] It was the question of your ruling, you had given ruling. Ten days have passed, but no action has been taken so far. That should be answered in the House itself... [Interruptions] Mr. Speaker Sir, the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs is present here. This matter should be taken seriously because this point is not only related with U.P. but with the entire country... [Interruptions]... Mr. Speaker, Sir, please note the hon. Minister is leaving the House.

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI (Jhansi): Mr. Speaker, Sir, you please ask the Minister to reply to it. He is playing with U.P.... [Interruptions]

MR. SPEAKER: You please sit down. The hon. Minister is making a statement [Interruptions].

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): I have talked to the Minister of Civil Aviation and Tourism. He has told me that he will write detailed letter in a day or two... [Interruptions]

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI (Gandhi Nagar): Mr. Speaker, Sir, you may recall that several Members had raised this issue here earlier. I informed you that the students of the Institute were very much agitated and if they are to be presented from going on the path of agitation, it should be clarified because there is no rational response for whatever has happened by now. Your letter to Shri Rajveer Singh or any other hon. Member will have no solution. It was indicated here that the hon. Minister would come here himself and make a statement, I am using this word deliberately because this issue is not related to one particular individual. The day before yesterday all the students called on me in a group and told that one was ready to hear them and talk to them. The Minister did not want to meet them. That is why they had come to Parliament. If it is not discussed in the House even then and the hon. Minister gives an assurance only that a letter to the hon. Member will be written will not solve the

issue. [Interruptions] According to my information in this matter, the land, was purchased in Noida for this very purpose and today it is being decided all of a sudden that the Institute in Nodia will shifted to Gwalior whereas the Gwalior University is already having such arrangement.

I know every thing in detail in this regard and can tell the House also. I think this decision is quite wrong. It is an injustice to the students of the Institute. It should be reserved.

[English]

SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Sir, I have already discussed the matter with the hon. Minister and he said that he would write a detailed letter to the hon. Member. However, I will bring this to the notice of the hon. Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: The only point is, whether the letter will be written or the statement will be made. [Translation]

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the House cannot function in this way... [Interruptions]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Lucknow): Mr. Speaker, Sir, what is your direction with regard to the matter the Leader of the Opposition has raised... [Interruptions].. This matter has been raised in this House. This matter cannot be solved merely by writing a love letter. Since the matter has come up in the House, its answer should be given in the House itself.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I will hear what the Minister has to say for the second time and then I will give my suggestion.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: You ask the Minister to stand up and say.

SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: SIR, as I

have already stated, I discussed the matter with the hon. Minister and he said that he is going to write a detailed letter about this to the hon. Member. [Interruptions] Now, since the hon. Leader of the Opposition has said that it is not the question of one Member of Parliament who is concerned about it, but everybody else is also concerned, I will bring this to the notice of the hon. Minister of Civil Aviation and Tourism that instead of writing to an Individual Member, he should consider making a statement on this matter. [Interruptions]

[Translation]

SHRI SHARAD YADAV (Madhepura): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have given a notice of resolution today under Rule 194. If a discussion is held on that resolution after consulting all concerned and after taking the views of all into account, the discussion, would be quite meaningful. I have given notice of this resolution because we are tense for the last one month. It is considered and a discussion is held, then that would be a positive discussion. That is why, I have given notice of a resolution on Ayodhya-Babri Masjid issue. I think all Members will agree to have discussion on it, so it can be taken up tomorrow [Interruptions]

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: We will discuss it in the Chamber. Such matters we do not discuss in the House.

[Interruptions]

[Translation]

SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA (South Delhi): Mr. Speaker, Sir, an R.S.S. Shakha in Kerala was assaulted by Islamik Seva Sangh. Riots occurred there. It is in my knowledge that the Kerala Government had constituted a committee under the Chairmanship of the members of Revenue Board which has submitted its report. The State Home Minister had made an assurance in

this regard that he would make a statement in the House. I would like to ask when this statement would be made.

[English]

SHRI RAM KAPSE (Thane): It was decided that the Minister will make a statement in the House about those riots. Malegaon riots have taken a very ugly turn and even a member of the Legislative Assembly was arrested. So many things have happened and there is no statement from the Minister.

When are you going to make a statement on Malegaon and Kerala? Why are you trying to avoid a statement on Malegaon and Kerala?

[Translation]

SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA: When a statement is being made in the other House, i.e. in the Rajya Sabha, why is it not being made in this House... [Interruptions]

SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I had told a week ago that hon. Minister would make a statement about Malegaon, Doda and Ayodhya. But they have not allowed the House to function for the last one week, how then the statement could be made. The statement is made in the House itself, it cannot be made outside... [Interruptions]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN (Roser): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I raised the issue of Law and Order situation in Delhi. The Leader of the Janata Dal Shri Kaliram Tomar has been missing for the last one week who has been kidnapped. It is a very serious matter. It is appearing in new newspapers. The Government must be aware of it. Prior to this incident, one of our party workers has been detained in Alipur police station and killed. I would like to urge upon the Government of India that the General Secretary of the Janata Dal had been kidnapped a week ago but the Delhi police is sitting smugly. What steps the Government of India has taken in this regard