

draw your attention to one point only.... I have also given notice to you yesterday.

[English]

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Sir, we very much appreciate what you have just now said. Let the hon. Minister make a statement and after that if a number of hon. Members approach you for converting it into a discussion under Rule 193, so that many other hon. Members can also participate, you consider it.

* MR SPEAKER: Please let us understand that if you want to have a regular discussion, as to how a regular discussion can be had that can be decided. Yesterday, it was not a motion. I did not have the motions with me. But, I turned it into a motion. I gave an opportunity at least to four Members to ask the questions and after that if you are not satisfied we will apply our mind and in consultation with you and in the Business Advisory Committee, we will decide as to how we go about it. But, if you set aside anything which we try to do regularly and try to do in some other fashion it becomes very difficult. May I request that you raise it; you hear the Minister and after that if you are not satisfied then we will take it up.

13.14hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF
URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE
RECENT MINE DISASTER AT THE
NEW KENDA COLLIERY OF THE
EASTERN COALFIELDS LTD.
RESULTING IN DEATH OF MANY
COAL MINERS.

[English]

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Midnapore):
Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of
Coal the following matter of urgent public

importance and request that he may make
a statement thereon.

"Situation arising out of the recent
mine disaster at the New Kenda
Colliery of the Eastern Coalfields
Ltd., resulting in injuries and death
of coal miners and steps taken by
the Government in this regard."

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR
(Durg): I would like to draw your attention
only to.....

MR. SPEAKER: I have always taken
notice. But it every hon. Member want me
to act according to him, how will this house
function?

[English]

You will get the opportunity. Please
understand the procedure at least. I feel
very much unhappy. I have said that you
will be allowed.

13.14 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE
MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT PANJA):
Sir, a great tragedy has struck the coal
family and taken the lives of 55 of its
members at New Kenda Colliery of Eastern
Coalfields Limited (ECL) on 25.1.94. The
Colliery is at a distance of about 15km. from
Raniganj town. It produces about 900
tonnes of coal of high grade (Gr.B) per day.
The Colliery has a total manpower of 2,133.
It has two seams, namely, Kenda and
Dobrana. Both of them have been

categorised as Degree-II as per gassiness. While the present working in Dobrana seam consists of development (formation of pillars), Kenda seam has both depillaring and development operations.

2. On 25.1.94, a total of 237 workmen had reported for duty in the underground workings of Dobrana seam. Towards the end of the shift, a Mining Sirdar, who was coming out of the mine, came across smoke in the main intake roadway and, immediately after reaching the surface, informed the Colliery Manager at about 4 p.m. A team consisting of Agent and Colliery Manager immediately reached the mine and saw a blazing fire on the floor of the intake roadway about fifty meters away from the shaft. Information was sent to the rescue station at Sitarampur and also the Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS) at Sitarampur. Rescue teams, Senior Officers of a ECL and officials of the DGMS rushed to the site. By the time it was established the 55 workers had not come out of the mine and were trapped inside. Immediate combing operations were started by the rescue team for locating the trapped miners. The efforts of the rescue teams were hampered because of heat, thick smoke and roof falls. Till 14.2.94, the rescue teams had made 341 sorties and about 1,000 persons were working on these operations. Intensive fire fighting operations were taken for reaching the areas where survivors/dead bodies could be there. For this purpose, nitrogen gas was poured through pipe from 30.1.94. Liquid nitrogen was also poured from the same day through boreholes drilled from the surface. Up to 14.2.94, a total of 292 kilo liters of nitrogen has been poured through boreholes.

3. I moved to the control room of CIL at Calcutta at about 11.00 a.m. on 26.1.94 and started monitoring the rescue and other

operations personally. I reached Sanctoria, the headquarters of ECL, at about 11.00 a.m. the next day, that is 27.1.94 and held detailed discussions on the progress of the rescue operations at Kalla Hospital of ECL, wreaths were given as a mark of respect to the departed souls whom I considered to be martyrs in our struggle for achieving economic self-reliance.

4. The site of the accident was visited on various dates, among others, by Secretary, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Coal, Shri H.B. Ghose, Ex-Director General of Mines Safety and Director Coal Mines Research Station, Dhanbad, Chairman, Coal India Limited camped at the site right from 26th January 1994, alongwith CMDs of other subsidiary coal companies

5. Two dead bodies were located on 25.1.94, twenty-six on 26.1.94, five on 27.1.94, one each on 30.1.94 and 11.2.94, and two on 16.2.94, making a total of thirty-seven. After a detailed review of the situation, I issued immediate orders at the site to provide relief to the bereaved families in the following manner:

- (i) Immediate payment of Rs. 12,000 towards the household and funeral expenses to the widow or next of kin of the deceased.
- (ii) Besides paying all the entitlements (Rs. one lakh approximately), an ex-gratia payment of Rs. 50,000 each to the widow or next of kin of the deceased.
- (iii) Employment for one of the dependents of the deceased, in Eastern Coalfields Ltd.
- (iv) In case the widow or next of kin is not in a position to take up em-

ployment, option for taking a pension of Rs 3,000 per month till the widow reached the age of sixty

- (v) Transport facility at the cost of the company for the widow or the next of kin for taking the bodies to their place of choice for last rites
- (vi) Orders have been issued that dependent children of deceased employees be given free education with boarding and lodging upto the age of 18 years in any Ramakrishna Mission or Mother Teresa Schools at the cost of ECL

Accordingly, funeral expenses of Rs 2,000 have been paid to nominees of all victims Ex-gratia of Rs 10,000 for household expenses has been paid to nominees of 55 victims Special ex-gratia of Rs 50,000 has so far been received by the nomination of 34 victims Cheque for payment of gratuity and life cover are being made over to the claimants Dues on account of wages have been paid to nominees of 36 victims All these payments in respect of remaining victims will be made as soon as the nominees return from their villages after completion of funeral ceremonies Amount of compensation admissible under the Workman's Compensation Act has been deposited in all the cases with the Compensation Commissioner Employment has been offered to the dependents of the available families

In view of the difficulty in fully controlling the fire, it has been decided, in consultation with the representatives of the trade unions and the D G M S to seal off a portion of the mine, to prevent the spreading of the fire It is expected that, after sealing off a part of the mine, the rest of the

mine would be brought to normalcy The sealed off portion of the mine can be searched only after the fire in this zone is quenched and the area is approachable

As regards the remaining 18 persons whose bodies are still to be located, though efforts of rescue teams are still continuing, it has been decided in consultation with the representatives of trade unions that they may be declared as 'dead' for providing various benefits and relief measures announced

I have issued orders for carrying out a special safety audit of all the coal mines under Coal India Limited and Singareni Collieries Company Limited on priority basis, covering the underground mines in the first instance Action on the deficiencies that are brought out by the audit will be taken on a time-bound basis Instructions have also been issued to review and upgrade the communication facilities both underground and on the surface I have also issued orders to make it compulsory for all personnel going underground to carry with them the personal safety gear provided to them and anybody violating this shall be dealt with by exemplary punishment

Government have appointed a Court of Inquiry under Section 24 of the Mines Act, 1952, headed by a retired Judge of Calcutta High Court, Hon Justice Shamsuddin Ahmed, to inquire into the causes of and the circumstances attending the accident The Court of Inquiry has been asked to present its report within three months

The Company and its subsidiaries have been directed to reassure safety of men machines and mines with highest priority in the working of the coal mines

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: We shall go to next item. As it is said, the zero hour will be. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Sir, are you going to dispose of this Call Attention Motion and adjourn or are you holding it over? (*Interruptions*)

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankura): Sir, you convert into a discussion under Rule 193 and then you call the Members whose names are there in the list.

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria): Sir, Shri Indrajit Gupta is to speak. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Sir, what is this? It is our practice in this House that whenever there is a Call Attention Notice tabled., copies of the statement which the Minister is going to make on that are supplied to us before we can ask questions. No such copies have been supplied to us. This is the first irregularity I want to point out. It is important. One has to study it.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is very relevant.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Why not you hold it over till after lunch or something? (*Interruptions*)

SHRI AJIT PANJA: Sir, by way of clarification, I have supplied whatever copies are required for Parliament Section, so far as my Department is concerned. We have supplied copies.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us see whether there is any lapse on the part of our office. (*Interruption*)

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Sir, let

this item be postponed and we can take it up after Lunch. (*Interruption*)

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Sir, we have to go through the statement. Will we get copies of the statement?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Copies of the statement will be supplied to you. Can we proceed with this item now?

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Sir, the statement runs into four pages. You must give me a chance to go through the statement.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, this item will be taken up after Lunch. Now we shall take up Zero Hour and it should be completed within half-an hour. (*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI HARIN PATHAK (Ahmedabad): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, whenever the Government disagrees to the Narmada Scheme and the Ministers and the political leaders express different views, people of Gujarat become agitated I have conveyed the aspirations of the people of Gujarat in this House time and again and emphasised how important the Narmada Plan is for us.

Just three days ago, the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh had convened an all party meeting in which he submitted that he wanted to reduce the proposed height of Narmada dam from 455 feet to 436 feet. The people of Gujarat were already agitated over this matter. I would like to submit to the Government that when the tribunal has already fixed the height at 455 feet why does the Government disagrees to the issue time and again. It really hurts the feelings of the people of Gujarat. Hopes, aspirations and feelings of lakhs of farmers

have been associated with the Narmada project.

Through you, I would like to submit to the Government that Narmada project is a question of life and death for us. If the Government go back on its word and create hurdles in this regard, people of Gujarat would not tolerate it at any cost. I would also like to submit that the Government should not backtrack with regard to their own decision and decision taken by the tribunal. Implementation of Narmada Project is utmost necessary for us. On behalf of the people of Gujarat I would also like to submit to the Government that the personal statement of various Ministers like those of the Hon. Minister of Environment and Forests mislead the people and also create discontentment in Gujarat.

I would like that Shri Vidyacharan Shukla should assure the people that the project would be implemented. The total estimated cost of the project was Rs. 600 crores. We will have to mobilise all the resources for the project. The Government of Gujarat has requested the Central Government to clear the Narmada project. The Government should not pay any heed to various observations and stick to the decision they have taken. The project must be implemented at any cost. The Central Government should make an announcement to this effect and give an assurance to the people of Gujarat.

[English]

SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR (Durg): I would like to raise of delay in giving accommodation from the Central Government Press Pool to the Press Information Bureau accredited journalists. Sir, this matter has been hanging for the last one and a half years and the question of

accommodation to the accredited correspondents of Delhi has not been settled. The Press people have approach all the avenue at all levels but it has not been taken care of until now.

I also want to draw your attention to the proposed strike by the Delhi Journalists on the day of presentation of the Union Budget, to press for their demand for a fresh Wage Board. Journalists have given notice to the Speaker that while presenting the Budget, they will boycott the Budget proceedings because many times, promise has been made that there will be wage board for the journalists but it has been made postponed and postponed and it has been said that because of the pressure from the Press barons of India, this thing has been postponed regularly.

I would request through you to see that their grievances are met by the Government.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (Punskura): Being a member of the Press Council, I also wholeheartedly support what Mr. Chandrakar has said. It should be looked into.

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI (Deogarh): I have also given a notice on this. I may be allowed one minute.

It is for the first time that the newspaper staff are going on strike on the day of the Budget. That means, the Budget proceeding will be boycotted by the Press. It is a serious matter. Their demand is for setting up of a wage Board, which can be expedited. The Government can discuss with the Press representatives so that the unpleasant situation would be averted. Naturally they have been waiting since long for this. Again today also, being the 24th,

when the Railway Budget was presented, they had a programme to come out with a procession before the Parliament House. As you know, media is also a part of

The Parliamentary system. Naturally, attention should be paid and this situation should be averted by holding discussion with them.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria) Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I fully support what has been raised by Shri Chandrakar. I had also given a notice to speak on it. I would request the press people that the day when the Annual Budget is presented is an occasion. That is why they should not boycott it. We are here in Parliament to fight their cause before such a situation arises. The Central Government should honour their assurance and should soon constitute a wage board and implement its recommendations immediately.

SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI ASHRAF FATMI (Darbhanga) Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to an important issue. I have written a letter to the hon'ble Speaker also that the whereabouts of our leader and former Prime Minister, Shri Vishwanath Pratap Singh, who has promised to come back to Delhi only when the recommendations of the Mandal Commission are implemented, should be traced. His health is deteriorating day-by-day. The people and we want to know as to where he is, is he within the country or abroad. Since he is a former Prime Minister, the members and the whole country should have knowledge about him. The time limit of 6 months of his self-exile is also coming to an end. So, all his followers and admirers in the whole country should be informed his health

I would request you that the House and the country should be informed of it. I have written a letter in this regard to the hon'ble Speaker also.

[English]

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER Mr Mohammad Ali Ashraf Fatmi, there are others also to speak. You have availed of the chance.

SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI ASHRAF FATMI It is a very important issue.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER Who is there to answer this? The Government will not answer. You have to bring it to the notice of the Government.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI ASHRAF FATMI Not only myself but the people of the whole country want to know about him. I would like to know you from whether I would get an information as to his whereabouts and his health. Will we and the country be given information about it? They should tell us.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT PANJA) You know very well about it.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER Complete your speech.

I cannot ask the Government to give a reply. How can they give unless you give a notice? Co-operation of the hon'ble Ministers is absolutely essential. Each one can speak for one minute so that I can complete the list of Members to speak.

501 *Call Attention to Matter of* PHALGUNA 5, 1915 (SAKA) *Urgent Public Importance* 502

SHRI SUDARSAN RAYCHAUDHURI (Serampore) I am to invite your attention to the present sorry state of affairs of Export Inspection Agencies under the Ministry of Commerce, Government of India Under the liberalisation system of quality control and inspection, work-load of these Export Inspection Agencies has already been reduced Not only that In the last 27 years, this Agency has acquired the expertise, the skill and technology for quality control of Indian Products But this is being unutilised to a great extent today and the workers and employees of these EIAs are facing retrenchment Only two days back, in Delhi near Udyog Bhavan, they held a dharna and the workmen of these agencies have come from all over India to ventilate their grievances

I seek through you from the Government a review of Notification issued by the Ministry relaxing quality control measures because this Notification is eroding the responsibility and the work load of the EIA and the job securities of all the employee Grants-in-aid may be sanctioned to meet the deficit caused due to the liberalised system of quality control and there should be no retrenchment of the employees and payment of their salaries should not be stopped in any way

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER Mr Sudarsan Raychaudhuri, you should allow others also to participate in the debate

SHRI SUDARSHAN RAYCHAUDHURI The Government cannot remain silent observer while an organisation statutorily build up is being robbed of its functions, which is much to the detriment of the product quality of Indian goods

You know France has already rejected

export of our marine products After the GATT rule, heavily stringent sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures would be imposed on Indian exports

Under the circumstances, if EIA is eroded of its responsibility, things would become worse

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER You cannot prolong your speech You must give an opportunity to other Members also to speak

SHRI SUDARSAN RAYCHAUDHURI EIA should be given more powers It work-load should not be reduced and the workmen and the employees should not be retrenched

[Translation]

SHRISHYAMBIHARI MISRA (Bilhour) Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the House and specially that of the hon'ble Minister of Home Affairs to the fact that Shri Kala Bachcha Sonkar belonging to Scheduled Castes was an elected member from a general seat belonging to scheduled casts He had contested last Assembly elections from Bilhour and was defeated by only 672 votes He was bombed to death openly on the road around 10 A M on 9th February, 1994 His body was not handed over to his kith and kin His wife and mother were lathi-charged and tortured when they demanded the body His body was buried at night under police supervision and there were no criminal charges levelled against him at that time 60 FIRs had been lodged against him during the riots last year and 56 out of those charges were later expunged by the police Even then, he is being declared as a criminal by the State Government although he has been a very popular worker

Sir, my request to you and the hon'able Home Minister is to give him justice by getting the whole incident probed by the CBI. There have been many assaults on the people belonging to Scheduled Castes in Kanpur. The police tortured, beat up and looted the people belonging to Scheduled Caste in Khatikana. The whole incident should be probed by the CBI to ensure justice. He is being implicated in an enmity although it was a communal murder and there was no enmity. His cousin is being implicated in an enmity case...*(Interruptions)*.. my request to you is to get the whole case probed by the CBI to bring out the full facts and ensure justice.

[English]

SHRI SARAT PATTANAYAK (Bolangir): Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, there has been decline in the law and order situation in Orissa. Women are not feeling safe under the Janata Dal Government's rule. Rape, dowry death and eve-teasing have become acute and people are under threat. *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Pattanayak, please note the rules. Reading is prohibited.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI: This is very important. There is a great deal of resentment among the Congressmen particularly the youths and students. *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You have already spoken. Please sit down.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This will go on record.

*(Interruptions)**

SHRI SARAT PATTANAYAK: The enforcement machinery's alleged complicity in crime has compounded the situation. Deliberate attempt to muzzle peaceful democratic protest in the State by restoring the large scale arrest of Youth Congress (I) workers, unprovoked firing on students indicate the collapse of the system. The State Government should be dismissed early to retrieve the situation.

[Translation]

SHRI TEJ NARAYAN SINGH (Buxor): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the poor villagers at present do not have houses to live in. The funds provided by the Central Government to Harijans-Adivasis to construct houses under Indira Housing Scheme are very meagre. 50 percent people still do not have houses to live in even after 46 years of independence. Half the population live in the open with their families and they are not satisfied with the amount given to them.

That's why, Sir, I urge the Central Government that each Parliamentary constituency should be given Rs. 500 crores for Harijan-Adivasis to ensure speedy construction of their houses. This is my request to you.

SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH (Jahanabad): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the first thing I would like to point out is that now a days sixty thousand persons are being killed and about three lakh persons suffer injuries in road accidents every year.

But a very mild punishment is awarded to the persons responsible for these accidents. If you look at the official figures of road accidents from 1961 to 1991, you will find that these have increased by 10 times. The rate of death in road accidents per thousand vehicles in India is 17 times more than that of Japan, 13 times more than that of U.S.A. and England. It is astonishing that India has only one per cent of the world's vehicles whereas the rate of road casualties is 17 times more than those in other countries.

I therefore, demand that the Government should make proper amendment in the penal code for punishment against rash driving by setting up of a special court so that the guilty persons could be awarded due punishment and casualties in these accidents could be reduced.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer): Due to famine this time also a terrible and awesome situation have arisen in Rajasthan 22,986 villages of the State have been declared famine-hit. Out of them 14881 villages have been affected by 75 to 100 per cent drought 7705 villages have suffered 50 to 75 per cent loss. Above two and a half crore people have been affected. The State Government is short of resources.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture is sitting here. I request the Central Government to give special financial assistance to Rajasthan with a view to providing relief to the people of the State from the natural calamity funds and save the live stock. The problem of drinking water in rural areas has also become acute. There is excess of fluoride in water there. Therefore, more and more programmes to provide work to the people should be started under the

Famine Relief Programme to save the people and livestock there. Taking the geographical condition of Rajasthan in view special assistance should be provided to the State.

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA (Jaipur): I also hail from Rajasthan. I would also like to point out two things in this regard. The State Government is facing short of funds. Therefore, the Central Government should grant aid to deal with the famine condition. The Hon. Minister of Agriculture is present here. He also hails from Rajasthan which is facing famine. Therefore, taking the interest of Rajasthan in view; he should rise and announce assistance for Rajasthan. We shall be very grateful if he speaks something on this issue.

SHRI SUBRATA MUKHERJEE (Raiganj): The Chilka lake in Orissa is very famous. If this lake is properly utilised and fishery is undertaken foreign exchange can be earned by exporting fish. I request the Union Government that if the State Government is not in a position to do so, the Centre should take over this work and develop the lake.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think, many of the hon. Members participated in the Zero Hour today.

The House now stands adjourned to meet again at 2.45 p.m.

13.47 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned for Lunch till Forty Five minutes past Fourteen of the Clock.
