

August 22, 1995

371 *Alleged Killing of Six Miners
in Dugda Near Dhanbad*

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Please listen first. If you are to speak anything please speak later on.

[English]

SHRI MALLIKARJUN : The latest position as at 8 o' clock in the morning is : Dead : 175 injured : 218 and 135 bodies had been identified.

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Yadav, if you have anything else to speak, you can speak

...(Interruptions)....

[Translation]

SHRI SHARAD YADAV : You give chance to everyone.

MR. SPEAKER : I have given you three chances.

SHRI SHARAD YADAV : Now I am not inclined to speak anything on it. I beg pardon. You have done good. Now I leave it.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Chandarjeet Yadav.

.....(Interruptions).....

12.14 hrs.

[English]

[Thereafter Shri Sharad Yadav and some hon. Members left the House]

SHRI E. AHAMED (Manjeri) : Yesterday, you said that the number of persons dead was 260 and today you are saying 175. How can it be?

SHRI MALLIKARJUN : It is 275. Yesterday itself, I said that the number of persons dead was 260. How can it be 175 today?(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I have called Shri Chandra Jeet Yadavji. Now between yourself you are deciding. I do not know how to control the House.

SHRI MALLIKARJUN : Sorry Sir.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN (Rosera) : Mr. Speaker, Sir I feel hurt that some of our colleagues have left the House. If you permit me then I could call them back.

MR. SPEAKER : You call them back. This is not the way. They have been given time to express their point three times.

RE : CNN TIE-UP WITH DOORDARSHAN

[Translation]

12.17 hrs.

SHRI CHANDARJEET YADAV (Azamgarh) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to raise the issue concerning tie-up reached between Doordarshan and C.N.N. Now it appears that the Government has adopted the policy of liberalization and open market in the economic sphere without any deliberation and what serve the interests of our nation has been side tracked. And every Ministry and department of the Government has been announcing very proudly that its entire policy is in accordance with that of liberalization and the open invitation given to indigenous private sectors and foreign private sectors is reflected in the agreement signed between Doordarshan and C.N.N.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, you must be remembering that it is not a new question. B.B.C. which is acknowledged as worldwide organisation had been yearning to come in India in the wake of framing the policy of the Nation in 1956. It had tried to leave an indelible imprint on the developed countries through the largest market, vast population of this important country. But Pandit Jawahar Nehru and Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel had denied them the permission to this effect in clear terms and said that they did not know that you might impose your language, your propaganda machinery your, life style and your culture on a country if you want to disfigure its culture or carry out the campaign of disinformation as misinformation. This is a very well known and effective methodology adopted by imperialist and colonial countries I feel very sorry that Doordarshan has reached an unnecessary tie-up with CNN.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, CNN had been making efforts in this direction for a long time. Firstly it was before the advent of our liberal policy as well but this is the same Government which had time and again denied permission stating that we do not need it. We could ourselves do away with the shortcomings of our Akashvani and Doordarshan. We are capable of it. They are needed because of the behaviour of our news papers, our journalists and our media. The world is demanding their service. The U.N.O. has demanded it and has used it. Other developing countries of this world have invited our journalists and our media experts and utilised their expertise and services. People of our country are helping out in the system that has been made in the non-alignment movement. I want to say that Mr. Minister has said that we have been benefited from it and this was necessary for us and this has benefited our people. When it was inaugurated

under this agreement then our map was shown wrongly and parts of our country were shown either as parts of Pakistan or they were not at all shown. Whether it is not a mistake? One institute acknowledged as a big one at international scale has shown the map of India in which Assam and West Bengal were conspicuous by their missing. They had shown it on international scale. Our countrymen who had participated in this international seminar too lost sight of this lapse on their part. There are certain people in the world who deliberately indulge in anti-India propaganda and they conspire against the interests of India. They try to cast aspersions on Indian propriety and weaken our policy of national self-sufficiency.(Interruptions). Our People have upheld the policy of national self-reliance. I want to demand from the Government that it should scrap the agreement between CNN and Doodarshan. And after its scrapping, whatever the national policy is framed, should be deliberated upon because it is a very important subject in today's world.

Mr Speaker, Sir, computer is also being utilized in today's information technology and the way we want to utilize it has got good scope for its utilization. New technologies of other countries of world are also utilised. We have got such a situation which could create illusion in the entire world. So the Government should scrap it and the House should deliberate on what should be our policy. Then this House should take decision.

[English]

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Midnapore) : Sir, I am grateful to you because, for some time, I had been requesting you to allow me to raise this matter in some form or the other. But now, anyway, in the form in which it has come, I would just like to supplement what has been stated here by my colleague.

The point is that this is a question which is intimately connected with our media policy. It is connected with the question of the extent to which we are going to permit or not permit foreign media, particularly electronic media, satellite media to penetrate into our homes-actually, into every Indian home, one can say.

It is not only Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's policy which was laid down. The Second Press Commission had upheld this point that as far as presentation of news is concerned because it is a very sensitive matter any control should not be over it by foreign media.

Now, we are being told that because one-and-a-half million dollars or something like that is going to accrue to Doordarshan by way of fees, this is going to be profitable to us. But this is not a commercial question. It is a question of policy. And here I must say that several existing legislations which have been in force in this country have been violated by this agreement. The Cinematograph Act has been violated; the Indecent Portrayal of Woman Act has been violated. Several other Acts have also been violated, as I had written to you. Moreover, this matter was never brought before Parliament for its approval or disapproval. Not that it is obligatory, they can do it on their own if they want.

The point is this. Somebody is arguing that even without this agreement CNN by virtue of the cable service, has access to our channels. It is a fact; and that does not excuse the Government from going out its way to enter into an agreement and they themselves bring the CNN through the medium of an agreement into our television channels which it has done. They should tell us, why it has done so. Now, we know that it is not just a question of distorting the news.

May I just draw your attention briefly, by way of an example? It is not just directly connected with CNN, I agree. But this is the kind of a thing the foreign media does when it presents news. Here is the latest issue of the 'Time' Magazine. If I may quote just a few sentences, it refers to the fact that movie houses in the USA are showing a film called, 'Oh! Darling, This is India' and the film ends with an auction held at a building that resembles the United Nation Headquarters-where you are shortly going, Sir, leading a delegation- in which the villain who is a person looks like the President of India, offers the entire country to a group of foreign statesmen and multinational executives. The 'fake President' tells the bidders 'Over hundred' years ago, this country was governed by a foreign company and it was very profitable.....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : It is getting complicated now, please.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : He has referred to the fact. We know how the news is being presented by the foreign media. It is not only a question of distorting the map of India and showing the Kashmir is not a part of this country. They have also been doing many other things. My point is that apart from the violation which is taking place of our traditional norms of culture and morals and all that, people are complaining now that things are being shown which you cannot allow the children in your family to sit and watch. Everybody knows about it. Nudity, pronography, addiction to drugs, crime, violence and uninhibited sex of all kinds -- all this is being shown. I am sorry to say that some miniscule proportion of our population perhaps enjoys all these things.

But the point is, the long term effects of this are going to be disastrous for our country, for our culture, for our sense of morals or values that we have always cherished traditionally in this country, apart from the distortion of news. Therefore, I only wish to say that the Hon. Minister for Information and Broadcasting should have looked at it from the point of view of our long term policy, what is going to be its impact on our country and not try to persuade us by saying that they are going to get some fees of 1 ½ million dollars, for the commercial advertisement which are going to be shown. What is this 1 ½ million dollars? We cannot sell our whole country's values for a mess of pottage.

Therefore, I strongly protest against this gross violation that is being carried out of the policy which has been followed from the very beginning in our country which we were adhering to. I support the demand that this agreement should be reviewed and there must be a provision for proper review by competent people, by a committee; and this House should discuss it and then only such a matter should be finalised.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH (Chittorgarh) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will be very brief. I recollect well that this matter came up for discussion in one of your meetings when you were very kindly observed that you would permit such a presentation of views, but this presentation would be when the Hon. Minister is also present here so that we could elicit some response from the Government.

I join myself with whatever views my senior colleague Shri Indrajit Gupta has expressed and say something very briefly without going into any elaborate analysis because all this is being done in the absence of a media policy. Secondly, it is charged - and there are grounds to asses that this is in violation of the existing and laid down norms both about the visual media as well as about the print media. Thirdly, what is our objection? If the assertion is made about the freedom of expression, our Constitution grants freedom of expression to an Indian citizen.

That freedom of expression is granted to Indian citizens, not to foreign nationals. This is a specific aspect of the Indian Constitution that needs to be borne in mind.

Thirdly when you permit visual media, the national carrier of news is the Doordarshan. If the national carrier of news starts riding piggyback on some other carrier, then I find that demeaning. The national carrier can have technical exchange of news with whosoever it likes. But our national carrier cannot get married to somebody else. It is a very fundamental question.

[Translation]

Today, Doordarshan is our source of news and Doordarshan ties a knot with any other institute for producing news in a convenient way. It would pose a great problem and since we do not have much information with us in this regard, we would like to have more information from the Government.

[English]

What have they actually done-up-linking or down-linking? What are the terms and conditions?

[Translation]

It is impalatable that it could be sold out for 15 lakh dollars. My request to you is, Mr. Speaker, Sir,.....(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur) : It is an Indian film.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH : No, I have a different view, now, the matter of Indian films and obscenity has come up. I will request Indrajit Gupta Ji(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : How has the censor passed it?(Interruptions)

SHRI JASWANT SINGH : This is a different matter altogether.

On the question of obscenity, with due regard to what my senior Comrade Indrajit Gupta has said, I think, the principal perpetrators of obscenity today are really the Indian films, the Zee TV and others. So, we have to call a spade a spade. I think the rot has really begun from somewhere else. But that notwithstanding, the central point remains which I reiterate that this is a very important subject. It is very kind of you that you have permitted me to say very briefly what I did too. But it would be more meaningful if the honourable the Minister were present.

[Translation]

He should come to spellout what figures in this new tie or agreement by Doordarshan, whether he comes as a bride or bridegroom. It does not matter.

If we discuss about marriage without bride and bridegroom it is not good, so you should call him so that we may ask him.

[English]

SHRI RUP CHAND PAL (Hooghly) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a matter of grave concern to all of us - to the whole nation. We have noticed certain things after the Doordarshan and CNN deal was made on 30th of June this year. The DG (Doordarshan) signed the deal on behalf of the Govt of India. The argument that is being put forward by the Doordarshan is that a lot of revenue earning can be made as a result of this deal. But we consider it is a major deviation from the policy we have been pursuing since the mid '50s.

A few months ago, there was a controversy with regard to the relaying of the 'Hero Cup'. So many things had happened. The Supreme Court had given a verdict. That is a very important verdict. We had noticed the Government requesting us that we should all support the Government that doordarshan is being denied the opportunity in the case of presenting the game through Doordarshan. Just within a few months, a major change took place in the attitude of the Government. We remember that when the question of tie-up of the Financial times and the Business Standard had come up, the government had categorically stated; it cannot be allowed.

In the case of agencies, the question came up that no foreign news agency should be allowed except through our own news agency.

Sir, I am giving you an information that Pakistan is very much in agreement with CNN since 1990 and that agreement allows CNN to project Pakistan's views on very important matters which may affect us also. We had asked this question to important people saying that we do not have editorial control over the presentation of CNN news. What will happen in a situation when we are having some difficult relations with neighbouring countries or other? It will affect our foreign relations; it will have serious foreign policy implications on the Government. It may have serious implications on our elections also. It may be used by important people and authorities because such CNN news and presentation of views will not come within our election code of conduct. It cannot be controlled by that. There is a fear that the ruling party may misuse CNN in their own interest. So, this deal has been expedited in their own political interest. I want that this deal should be scrapped.

[Translation]

SHRI RABI RAY (Kendrapada) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, first of all I would like to say in this regard that the Government has unilaterally announced the decision for Doordarshan-CNN tie-up before placing it on the Table of the House. We had raised this issue in the

House. Mr. Speaker, Sir, you are also aware that the Government had constituted a Committee one and a-half year ago headed by Shri Salveji regarding the entry of foreign print media in the country. We protested against this issue and the Minister had given an assurance that the foreign print media would not be allowed. It was leaked, one and-a-half year ago that the Committee favoured the entry of foreign print media. The print media took an assurance from the Government that it would not be done. But now the issue of CNN has come up. It is my view that national interest should be of paramount concern in taking any decision. Has the media policy of 1956 - which barred the entry of foreign media - been changed? Government's announcement is not in the national interest. The Government does not think of strengthening the media. It is not being discussed to produce good programmes for strengthening it. Regarding the Doordarshan-CNN tie-up the Government failed to give a single argument, to show that this is in the national interest. In case of a war between America and Iran, I have no doubt and you too will agree that CNN will support America. The argument is being given that the tie-up will result in some income and this is only commercial tie-up. We should not overlook the consequent invasion on our culture, civilisation and heritage. The Government should reconsider its decision and keeping in view the opinion of the House, it should be cancelled.

[English]

SHRI ARJUN SINGH (Satna) : Sir, I will not repeat what the hon. members have said before me. Having a little knowledge of the mechanics of how the foreign print media has been sought to be given leverage in this country, I would like to remind the House that the Policy laid down in 1956 and earlier, about the foreign print media coming into India has not been revised to the best of my knowledge and this decision in my view, is only to test the waters since the print media was the subject matter of that Policy decision. They have gone into this agreement in the name of the Electronic Media, the real objective of which is to ultimately revise the 1956 Policy decision. They do not have the courage to say so openly and say that 'we are revising it and now introducing a new policy'. This is a subterfuge way to actually go round and behind that Policy.

I think it must be discussed in Parliament and only then it should be allowed to be implemented.

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Minister please

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I happened to watch the CNN fairly and regularly and I got into this habit when I went into the Foreign Office in 1991 in the Foreign Office of the Ministry of External Affairs in South Block, there were sets laid there having connection with CNN. The sets and the connections were made by the previous two non-Congress Governments, which the Ministry of External Affairs then conceded as an important input of information in the context of the Gulf War. Then both the previous non-Government had put this in the rooms of the Foreign Ministers and also the Secretaries and it was conceded then, that the CNN was really an important source of information even for the Ministry of External Affairs.

So, I am relating this(Interruptions) I must also say that after I left I continued to watch C.N.N. since antennas can be put anywhere in the country and the CNN is available anywhere in the country. Now, I am relating this merely as a personal experience.

On the question of policies I will pass on this debate to the Minister of Information and Broadcasting.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR (Ballia) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is very unfortunate that some Ministers have developed a habit to pass on everything to the previous Government. It is a fact that the CNN was giving the details of the armed conflict in the Gulf and in certain strategic places. It was put in order to monitor what was happening in the Gulf area. It did not mean that the whole Policy was being changed. I do not know, what this Minister is talking about. Here we are talking about the policy of the Government and not about many things which were installed in offices of the Government of India, in the security departments to watch over what is happening in the world. It does not mean that we are making the network available to the whole public(Interruptions)

SHRI HARI KISHORE SINGH (Sheohar) : Sir, the hon. Minister has referred to the installation of set. I had something to do with this installation of sets at the Foreign Office. At that time, Gulf war was there.

I think the Government of India at the highest level should be well informed and this is not a Policy question(Interruptions)

SHRI UMRAO SINGH (Jalandhar) : What is wrong in that?(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Let the concerned Minister respond to the debate in a form of the Statement please.

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Lucknow) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am grateful to you for allowing me to raise an important issue. The Centre-State relation is an important aspect of our democratic system. There is a division of rights and power in the Constitution. Law and order is a State subject. There was a controversy over the issue of performing a Yajna, on the occasion of Janamastmi at Mathura. The State Government succeeded in resolving the issue peacefully. But the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh has made a serious allegation against the Centre that by taking advantage of Yajna controversy, the Centre had conspired to interfere in the State. The Minister of State for Home Affairs is not present in the House. The Chief Minister made an allegation against him that on 11th August he went to Mathura and made an inciting statement. Not only this he pressurised the State officials to urge the State Government to hand over the administration of Mathura to the Centre to interfere in the State. According to the Constitution the Centre can interfere if the State so agrees. But, the Centre pressurised the State Government and the officials. Can it be justified? The Centre was asking for the right to interfere. The Centre also suggested that under section 30 of Cr.,P.C. the CRPF Commandants should be given the powers of the Magistrate. It was a conspiracy to create another State within the State and the Minister of State for Home Affairs has participated actively in the Conspiracy.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have the statement of the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. There is another serious allegation. I want to read a part of that allegation-"the Central Government had rushed Central Reserve Police Force there. In that force such personnel were sent who would deliberately do such acts which would deteriorate the law and order situation." I am just quoting, if the members demand, I am ready to place it on the Table(Interruptions).

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR (Ballia) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Chief Minister had requested for the Central Reserve Police Force. The statement was made later on. In the force there were some officers or constables who wanted to create disturbance. Would this be discussed in the House?(Interruptions)

SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA : They were sent deliberately(Interruptions)

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to know(Interruptions)

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Someone ask for the despatch of Security Force(Interruptions)