

that on 14th of March a delegation of 5 Members of Parliament consisting of myself, Shri Nitish Kumar, Shri Srikanta Jena, Shri Chhedi Paswan and a former Member of Parliament Shri K.C. Tyagi inspected the place and held talks with the local people. Even now tension prevails there.

Sir, the hon. Minister of State of Home Affairs, Shri Pilot is present in the House at the moment and through you I would like to submit that while on 14th of this month we are going to celebrate the birth centenary of Baba Sahab Bhimrao Ambedkar, we have witnessed the incident of insulting the statue of Baba Saheb which has hurt the sentiments of crores of people. I would like to request Shri Pilot to immediately divest the said S.D.M. of his post and file a suit against him. I would further like to submit that the false case under which 6 innocent persons have been sent to jail, should immediately be withdrawn... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI NITISH KUMAR (Barh): We all had gone there. A reign of terror has been let loose there. Battalions of P.A.C. have been deployed there who are committing atrocities on the people. I would, therefore, like to submit that the Government should immediately look into the matter so that there is no reign of terror there and the action against the erring officials is taken.. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: This is the birth centenary year of Baba Sahab Bhimrao Ambedkar. And in this year there has been the incidents of damaging the statues of Baba Sahab. He is being insulted.... (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I share the sentiments of the hon. Members. I will personally look into this incident. I assure the House that Government will take strictest possible measures in this connection. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Now you want to make

a statement on bomb explosion at Calcutta.

12.58

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

BOMB EXPLOSION IN CALCUTTA

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to share the concern of the House on the tragic incident of the explosion that took place in Calcutta on 16th March, 1993. Immediately on learning about the unfortunate incident, I rushed to Calcutta early in the morning yesterday to take stock of the situation with a view to assist the State Government in their efforts. Also, I had intention to come back to the House before House is adjourned so that the House is aware about the incident and the situation there.

The learned Members of the House would be by now aware of most of the details. However, for placing the facts on the record, I would like to give the available details.

On 16th March, 1993 around midnight, that is, at 11.58 PM or so, a big explosion occurred at shop-cum-residential premises at Nos. 266 and 267 in Bowbazar Street at Calcutta. One three-storeyed and one two-storeyed buildings were demolished in this explosion. Damage to walls, doors and windows of four adjoining houses was caused resulting in the death of 62 persons and injuries to 92 persons. Of these, 45 have been hospitalised and 47 have been discharged after first-aid.

Ninety-two people were injured. Out of 45 hospitalised persons, condition of 16 persons is serious. I visited the hospital along with the Chief Minister of West Bengal

and met the injured persons and offered any medical assistance or help from the Centre which the State Government wants from the State Government's side. Later, I also visited the spot where this incident had taken place. I held detailed consultations with the Chief Minister of West Bengal, senior Government and police officials and assured full support of Government of India as may be required.

Rescue operations are still continuing with the help of the police, Central Paramilitary Forces and Army, fire-fighting units and civil defence personnel.

Special efforts are being made to provide proper medical care to the injured persons. Relief is being provided to the people who have been evacuated from the area and other affected areas.

A team of experts, on the Bombay pattern of investigation which we have ordered, from various agencies and discipline were sent to Calcutta before I left Calcutta, they had arrived there at 3.30 or so to ascertain the cause of explosion. In addition to the above, experts of agencies located in Calcutta are also assisting in the investigations.

Additional para-military forces are also being made available to the State Government, as per my discussions with the honourable Chief Minister.

Two persons have been arrested so far. Investigations are in progress. Before I reached the spot, the honourable Chief Minister informed me that they were apprehensive about two persons and that they have been arrested.

I can understand the anxiety of the House to know whether there is a linkage between the explosions that took place in Bombay and in Calcutta. That must be the anxiety of every honourable Member here. The investigations are still in progress and

every possible aspect is being looked into, and, as such, it is not possible at this stage to give any definite conclusion to this. But the impression, however, which I got on the basis of my discussions with the State Government officials and the injured people, is that nothing strongly appears to have come to notice so far establishing linkage between the two incidents. Nothing, however, can be ruled out at this stage. When I was talking to the people on site, some of the people were saying that there was a dispute on the building. Some people were saying that actually people on daily wages like carpenters and doing some other job and earn in the day used to sleep ten in a room in that building and that there was no fixed number.

[Translation]

PROF RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer). You should also mention the names of the arrested persons

SHRI RAJESH PILOT The name of one of them is Mr Rashid

[English]

There is no problem. There is nothing which we would like to keep away from the House. (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH (Anola) The two mafia groups have the backing of two separate political parties i.e. of C.P.M. and the Congress party. This has come out in several newspapers that rivalry between the two mafia groups is responsible for all that happened. (Interruptions)

SHRI MRUTYUNJAYA NAYAK (Phulbani) It was begun by you on the 6th December. (Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI RAJESH PILOT Let me assure the House that I will come back by evening

and I am going to assure you in that respect, as the hon. Member has an apprehension. I am going to assure on the Government side. Sir, why I said that there is no linkage which seems to be there is because I have visited Bombay and Calcutta also. When we visited Bombay, Mr. Ram Naik was with us. The blast at one building had taken up to two to three floors all together and even the surroundings of that building, upto 200 to 300 yards were affected. Mr. Naik was with me and he can recollect the passport office where the blast took place. The building across the road was totally shaken up.

They have used such a highly explosive device. When I was talking to some people who were rescuing the people at that moment, they said that they had smelt sulphur with lightning sort of a thing, with a very heavy sound and then smoke and some little sound of siren. This gave a clue that sulphur has been used in this particular explosion. So, it is at that stage and we have deputed the same pattern of team which was doing the Bombay investigation. I am very hopeful that we will soon get some clues from the persons who have been arrested. The locality people have themselves said and we heard all of them. Somnathji was with me and my colleague, Mr. Panja, was with me. The honourable Chief Minister assured us that nobody shall be spared, that is, whosoever is involved in the act of bomb making

SHRI KAMAL CHAUDHARY. (Hoshiarpur) Has Mr. Rasheed got any links with terrorists organisations?

SHRI RAJESH PILOT. At this moment, I am giving you whatever the State Government has informed me. They have arrested him on apprehension. This is the information they had and I must make it clear that the State Government was very effective and he was immediately arrested.

State Government all over the country have been asked to maintain maximum vigil and alert and to step up security measures to the fullest including public awareness and security. We have informed that public awareness is a must in such cases and the Gov-

ernment and the State Governments could be helped by this. They have been advised to establish control rooms right upto district levels for round-the-clock monitoring.

I returned from Calcutta. Flight was delayed due to technical snag. One of the aircraft engines went wrong and on emergency, we had to land at Lucknow. I was joking with Somnathji. He asked the reason for the delay. The idea was to reach there by 7 O' clock so that we could share the information there. I rushed out yesterday night to Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat and had an exchange with the Chief Minister and the honourable Governor.

[*Translation*]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Lucknow): Tell us about Madhya Pradesh. Why did you go there?

[*English*]

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: I am going to other States also. I have gone to Madhya Pradesh because, as you may have read in the papers, there was information about a truck carrying nearly 10 quintals of sulphur and other explosives from Ratlam to Chatrapore, near Shore. I have gone there so that I can render any help that the State Government may like to have. I also propose to visit other States to ensure better interaction at this time and fullest cooperation from the Centre to the States to face the challenge of disruptive forces, so that nothing is left unattended. The intention is to see that the Centre and State can do their best to save the nation from such forces.

I went to Gujarat also. At 3.30, I was with the Governor of Madhya Pradesh. Early morning at 5 o' clock, I was with the Chief Minister of Gujarat and their officials. I plan to visit other States today and tomorrow, so that we are in touch with each other. We must face the challenge posed by these forces and we must do it as one nation so that these disruptive forces do not disturb the unity and integrity of our nation.