

(SHRI S. B. CHAVAN): Sir, before I had left for Calcutta no such information was made available by the West Bengal Government. Actually when I reached Calcutta, after discussing everything with the Chief Minister, that evening I got a report from the Government and I have incorporated certainly a part of it in my Statement also.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: The day you told us, next morning you went to Calcutta.

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN: Yes, but I did not receive anything.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: How much time did you need to receive that information? (*Interruptions*)

15.51 hrs.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER -CONTD

Firing In Calcutta On 21st July, 1993

THE MINISTER OF HOME-AFFAIRS
(SHRI S. B. CHAVAN): Sir,

The West Bengal Yuva Congress gave a protest call for laying siege on the Writers Building, the headquarters of the State Government, on 21.7.1993 against the alleged misdoings of the West Bengal Government, attacks on political workers by the CPM cadres, post Panchayat poll violence, deteriorating law and order situation and increasing corruption in Government.

2. According to the information received from the Government of West Bengal, on 21st July, 1993, large numbers of persons assembled at various places and tried to move towards Central Business District, commonly known as Dalhousie House, most of which was covered by prohibitory orders under Section 144 Cr. P. C. promulgated by the Commissioner of Police, Calcutta. The protestors and the police clashed at many

places. Police resorted to use of force, including the bursting of teargas shells and firing, to deal with the situation. The State Government's version is that there was damage to both private and public property in many places and that the policemen were injured in the mob attacks and hence police had to use force to deal with the situation.

3. In all, 12 persons died in police firing, another 65 were admitted to the city hospitals. Out of these, 12 persons had bullet injuries, 19 persons were injured by bomb splinters, one person by pellets and the rest by brickbats. 88 policemen were injured, including 21 officers. 38 policemen were hospitalised. The police fired 119 rounds from rifles, muskets and revolvers and also burst 341 teargas shells.

This version of the State Government is strongly refuted by the organisers of the protest. In their view, the police has used excessive force without any provocation. There were no barricades to stop people from moving towards the Writers Building. It is further alleged that force was used without giving adequate warning to the protestors.

In our democratic set-up resort to protest marches, rallies and agitations, to press for demands, is commonly adopted by various groups.

I visited Calcutta on 31st July, 1993. During the visit, I met cross sections of the people and also visited the injured persons in three hospitals. There is considerable resentment on the excessive use of force by the police.

I also met Shri Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister of West Bengal, and urged him to provide relief to the families of the deceased and those injured. I advised him to direct judicial inquiry into the incidents in view of the large number of persons injured and killed as a result of the police firing on 21st July, 1993.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR): Not one word, Sir, that the so-called protesters had used violent means. You have not said one word about it.

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN: In the beginning.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankura): No, you have not. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You ask for a discussion on the statement according to rule.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY: In the statement the Home Minister has said that the protestors gave a call to lay siege on the Writers' Building. Is there any democratic movement which calls for laying siege on a seat of power in the country? What is the meaning of 'laying siege'?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No clarification is allowed on the statement made by a Minister. Please take your seat now.

(*Interruptions*)

15.56 hrs

DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATAION (AMENDMENT) BILL

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, we go back to the discussion on the Delhi Muncipal Corporation (Amendment) Bill. Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL (CHANDIGARH): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the determination of late Shri Rajiv Gandhi to ensure that democracy percolates right to the grassroois of our polity and that democracy becomes meaningful to the common man in the street in villages, in small towns and in cities, two Constitution (Amendment) Bills intending to give constitutional mandate and constitutional sanctity to the Municipalities and the Panchayats were intro-

duced in 1989, and it was only narrow political ends which prompted the parties in the Opposition Benches to oppose those Bills and the same were dekasted in the Rajya Sabha. But, this did not deter the Congress Government from bringing the matter again and it was last year that the Constitution (seventy-third amendment) bill relating to the Panchayats and the Constitution (seventy-Fourth Amendment) Bill reating to the Nagarpalikas were passed by the two Houses of Parliament and these Bills received the assent of the President after being ratified by the reaqyuste number of States in April, 1993. As per the provisions of there two Bill, it is within a period of one year that the various State Legislatures would make necessary changes in their laws relating to the Municipalities and the Panchayats. I am happy to note that as concerns to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, the appropriate Government being the Central Government, this Bill has been brought about to bring necessary amendment in the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act of 1957.

Sir, while I commend the Government for bringing about this Amendment with promotitude, I was at a little loss when I heard the hon. Members from all the sides of this House speak about certain matters which should have been left to the Corporation but have been sought to be taken away. In this context, I am reminded of the discussion which, then, took place in the Joint Select Committee relating to the present Article 243 2B. This Article relates to the application of the Constitutional Amendment to the Union Territories. The provision as it then existed in the Bill made a postulation that the President, if he so desired, could, by notification, direct that the provisions of this Chapter, that is, Chapter IX A, would not apply to Union Territory.

16.00hrs

There was a unanimity of opinion amongst the Members and, therefore, in the