

12.03 hrs.

RE. MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM (Tiruchirapalli): I have given a notice under Rule 377 regarding some nasty publications denigrating and preaching blasphemy...

SHRI SAUGATA ROY (Barrack-pore): rose.

MR. SPEAKER: I have allowed that. Others also have given.

SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM: I got the information that it has not been allowed.

MR. SPEAKER: Your information is wrong. It has been allowed. Shri Saugata Roy and a number of others have given. All that you say is that yours is not allowed.

MESSAGE FROM RAJYA SABHA

SECRETARY: Sir, I have to report the following message received from the Secretary-General of Rajya Sabha:—

"In accordance with the provisions of rule 127 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I am directed to inform the Lok Sabha that the Rajya Sabha, at its sitting held on the 5th December, 1977, agreed without any amendment to the Enemy Property (Amendment) Bill, 1977, which was passed by the Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 29th November, 1977."

12.04 hrs.

RE. MATTERS UNDER RULE 377—  
Contd.

श्री भगत राम (फिलौर) : अध्यक्ष  
महोदय, मैंने रूल 377 के तहत नोटिस

दिया है कि देश के एजुकेशनल सिस्टम में बहुत गड़बड़ फैली हुई है, कई यूनिवर्सिटीज बन्द पड़ी हैं और यूनिवर्सिटीज और कालेजों के स्टूडेंट्स में अनरेस्ट है . . .

MR. SPEAKER: I have allowed five statements under Rule 377. Some will be allowed today and some will come up tomorrow.

SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM: Your remark is rather uncharitable. You say, 'All that you want to say is that your motion is not allowed'. It is not correct. How do I know that it is allowed. All that I have been informed only is, 'Your 377 notice is not allowed.' You are sitting in that position and we are in your hands and you should not pass such remarks.

MR. SPEAKER: What is it?

SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM: 'All that you say is that your motion is not allowed.' That is what you said. The motion is not allowed. That is my point. It is an insinuation.

MR. SPEAKER: You are seeing an insinuation when there is none. Some people are sensitive.

SHRI VASANT SATHE (Akola): Will you kindly let me know on what date it is coming up?

MR. SPEAKER: Possibly tomorrow.

Now we take up call attention.

12.06 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

REPORTED EXPLOSION IN THE HEAVY WATER PLANT OF ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION NEAR BARODA

SHRI ANANT DAVE (Kutch): I beg to call the attention of the Prime Minister to the following matter of urgent public importance and request

**BHATNAGAR**

Bhatnagar

that he may make a statement thereon:

'Reported explosion in the Heavy Water Plant of the Atomic Energy Commission near Baroda causing heavy loss and closure of the project for an indefinite period.'

**THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI MORARJI DESAI):** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I regret to inform the House that there was an explosion and fire at 4.30 p.m. on Saturday, the 3rd December, 1977 in the Amonia Synthesis Section of the Heavy Water Plant at Baroda. This was followed by a series of explosions, approximately twelve in number, due to the bursting of nitrogen cylinders kept in the Plant for process requirements. The fire at the bottom of the Amonia Converter was extinguished by 5.25 p.m. and the last flames of the fire were put out by 6.00 p.m.

Three persons received minor injuries from flying glass pieces. They were given first-aid and discharged from the hospital. Three firemen belonging to the Baroda Municipal Corporation were overcome by the fumes of Amonia and were attended to, but were not required to be hospitalised.

The first report shows that the fire seems to have been caused by the rupture of one of the two forged pieces where injection of Amonia is done to reduce the temperature of the synthesis gas. The reasons for the rupture of the forged piece will have to be investigated.

The damage caused by the fire and explosion is essentially to the cables, insulation, instrumentation and certain portions of the structure. The Plant will be examined completely and thoroughly to find out whether any other parts have been affected by the heat and the explosion. The Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission along with a technical team is at the site to inspect the damage. Till the complete examination is over, it is difficult to give an idea about

the extent of damage, the time that the repairs will take or the cost thereof.

A Committee consisting of two experts from the Gujarat State Fertilizer Company, one representative from the Ministry of Home Affairs and a representative of the Department of Atomic Energy is being set up to investigate the cause of the accident. The Committee will be empowered to co-opt such specialists as they would require for carrying out a thorough investigation.

None of the adjoining plants of the Gujarat State Fertilizer Company, which is the nearest production unit to this Plant, is affected.

**SHRI ANANT DAVE:** As the investigation is just going on, I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister only one thing. The Heavy Water is the second most critical item in nuclear reactors of the type constructed in Rajasthan, Madras and Narora. Now there will be no production due to this explosion. It is known that there was some leakage in the converter and the plant was shut down as the explosion occurred.

I would like to know who is responsible for this act or whether there is an act of sabotage. If yes, has any person been arrested or not? I would like the final report of the investigation team to be laid on the Table of the House.

**SHRI MORARJI DESAI:** Until investigation is complete, I cannot give any reply to the queries raised by my friend and there is no secrecy about the investigation report. It will certainly be laid here. There would be no objection.

**SHRI SAUGATA ROY (Barrackpore):** I would like to point out one discrepancy in the Prime Minister's statement. Yesterday's Statesman carried news item that twenty people altogether were injured in the blast. The Prime Minister mentions only six.

I hope the Prime Minister will clarify this.

This is a very serious set back to our nuclear programme and it is the second set back within the last three years. Just before the Pokhran blast, the heavy water plant which was being imported for our atomic power plant was lost in the sea. Due to this second blast the nuclear power production may be hampered for another one year. It may be mentioned that Heavy Water Plant at Baroda is meant for atomic reactors at Rajasthan, Narora and Madras, whose annual requirement is approximately 25 tonnes.

It may be mentioned that when we blasted the first nuclear device at Pokhran, there was a large and loud protest from a large number of nations and this year, when we asked for heavy water for our nuclear power plant at Tarapur, the Americans laid down a condition that unless we guarantee that we will not make even peaceful explosions any more, they will not give us heavy water. This only underlines that heavy water is an item in which it is very essential to be self-reliant and there are people in this world, the other countries, who are interested in seeing that India does not achieve self-reliance in the production of heavy water which is an absolute necessity for production of nuclear power.

So, in this context, the Prime Minister has mentioned that a team led by the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission is already conducting an enquiry. But, I do not think that a technical enquiry only will solve the problem. So in this context, I also want to ask the Prime Minister (a) whether he will specially order the C.B.I. to investigate if there is a hand of any foreign intelligence agency behind this, sabotage; (b) whether there is any hand of Anand Marg, which has already threatened to blow up a number of our installations which is behind this blast; and (c) what steps will be taken so that the Indian nuclear power

programme stays on time and our self-reliance is not delayed by this blast for whatever causes.

**SHRI MORARJI DESAI:** Well, if my hon. friend wants to give more credence to the Statesman, I can have no quarrel with him. But, I have given him the correct figures, the latest figures, which I have ascertained on phone from that place. It is for him to believe whomsoever he wants to believe. (*Interruptions*)

**MR. SPEAKER:** Please hear the Prime Minister.

**SHRI MORARJI DESAI:** After all, I have no comment to make about what has been stated by the Statesman. They certainly publish whatever they get from somebody or from somewhere. But, I am not saying something from somebody. I am saying here, as a responsible person in charge, after making an enquiry. The hon. Member should have the discretion to decide whom to believe. That is all I can say.

In the other matter, if he had heard me patiently, I had mentioned that there will be a representative of the Home Ministry in conducting that enquiry. That means that it will be investigated from all aspects. But, unless I get any clue, I do not want to make charges of sabotage against anybody. I do not start with suspicion on anybody. I would not like to have suspicion even against the hardest criminal, unless there is a positive evidence of it against him. Therefore, in the matter of Anand Margis I cannot say whether they are involved or not involved in it. But, if anybody is involved, then certainly he will be dealt with properly and squarely. That is all that I can say.

**SHRI G. M. BANATWALLA (Ponnani):** Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a matter of serious concern that misfortune seems to dog our heavy water programme. It is unfortunate that accidents take place at very critical times as has already been pointed out. We

[Shri G. M. Banatwalla]

had a successful nuclear test some three years ago and, soon thereafter, a mishap occurred which delayed our heavy water programme by two more years namely that two towers fell into the sea from the ship—these were coming from Germany but they never reached India.

Now, Sir, on that occasion also, an enquiry was conducted by the Department of Atomic Energy. The report of that enquiry has never come to light. It is necessary now that, when Baroda plant had successfully completed its trial runs, these accidents had taken place, so even the earlier report of the Atomic Energy Commission should be laid on the Table of the House.

Sir, these accidents happening at critical times to our heavy water programme and, consequently, to our nuclear programme, are a matter of serious concern. Therefore, a demand has been made about the C.B.I. enquiry. We cannot be complacent with only one representative of the Home Ministry sitting in Enquiry Committee with these specialists of the Atomic Energy. We also cannot wait till we find a clue and then start a thorough enquiry. It is a matter of serious concern. Misfortunes dog our programme. It is necessary that at this very juncture itself the matter should be given to the CBI so that even if any clues are not discovered by these cursory committees at least we are sure that there is no other hand that is causing destruction and damage to our programmes here in India.

I am also thankful to the Prime Minister for having said that the Report of this Committee will be laid on the Table of the House but I also want that the entire House and also the nation should be taken into confidence and the earlier Report to which I have referred should also be laid on the Table of the House. Let the Prime Minister apply his mind again to this whole misfortune that is dogging our heavy water programme and give an assurance on all these aspects.

SHRI MORARJI DESAI: Sir, I can understand the anxiety of my hon'ble friend and of the whole House about this matter and the suspicions raised. These are natural also. But I do not want to have the misfortune of a hurried judgment along with other misfortunes because that will increase the tempo of misfortune. Therefore, I have got to go about it cautiously but not without proper speed. That is why we are going into it as carefully as we can and a representative of the Home Ministry on the Committee does not mean that he will not enquire into it himself or with the help of other people, if that is necessary. But unless all these things are enquired into we cannot come to any conclusion on the suspicions about other people.

About the loss of those two towers which were off the coast of Spain when they were coming here three years ago the ship was caught in storm. That was not the work of any country. The storm engulfed the ship and that is why it had to be emptied. This has been carefully enquired into and I cannot find fault with anybody that they wanted to injure us.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: What is the report?

SHRI MORARJI DESAI: Well, I will find out. If it is necessary I will give it to you. I have no objection. I am not at fault. The fault lies with the previous government and not with me.

SHRI VASANT SATHE (Akola): We are not blaming you.

SHRI MORARJI DESAI: After three years what relevance will it have! I will look at that report and why it was not put up I will go into it. I also do not want to start with suspicion on the last Government as to why they did not put it and there was something sinister in it. I do not want to suspect that either. Therefore, I will have to go into it and see whether it can be put or not. I do not want to start with any presumption and find fault with it.



[Shri Morarji Desai]

precautions, but we must go with confidence and the courage. If my hon. friend, the External Affairs Minister suspected something, he is as human as the hon. Members are. And, therefore, I cannot say that he is less human. If he suspects, I am not going to quarrel with him. I only say I do not go on suspicions, not that their suspicion would not come to me also but then I do not act on suspicion. That is the only difference. I have nothing more to say.

12.40 hrs.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT RE. CALLING ATTENTION NOTICES

MR. SPEAKER: On the 1st and 2nd December, 1977 Members had raised certain points about the procedure for dealing with Calling Attention notices. Subsequently, the matter also figured at the sitting of the Business Advisory Committee held on 2nd December, 1977. I have carefully gone through the objections raised by the Members, the provisions of rule 197 which governs the procedure for Calling Attention and the past practice.

One of the objections raised on the 1st December, 1977 was that the Members whose Adjournment Motions had been converted into Calling Attention notices should have given separate notices under rule 197 to become eligible to participate in the ballot. I had agreed to that and explained under what circumstances names of those Members were included in the ballot. In this connection I may mention that the practice followed during the last Lok Sabha was that names of only those Members who had tabled Calling Attention notices were balloted for determining the names of 5 Members which were to be included in the entry for List of Business. On the 24th June, 1977 when Members tried to make submissions regarding their notices about lock-out in *Indian Express* and *Financial Express*, my distinguished predecessor observed in the

House that he had admitted a Calling Attention on the subject and names of Members who had tabled Short Notice Questions and notices under rule 377 would also be balloted. From that time the practice has been to include in the ballot for Calling Attention notices the names of Members who had tabled Short Notice Questions and notices under rule 377 on the subject.

Taking into account the objections raised on the 2nd December, 1977 that if decision on a Calling Attention notice was delayed, chances of the Members who had tabled Calling Attention at the first opportunity finding place in the ballot became relatively less when the number of names to be balloted increased on account of other Members tabling Calling Attention notices subsequently, I have decided that we may revert to the old procedure under which names of only those Members were balloted who tabled Calling Attention notices.

Similarly, the ballot under Rule 54 (4) for clubbing names on an admitted Short Notice Question shall be restricted only to Members tabling Short Notice Questions on that subject and names of Members tabling Calling Attention notices on the Subject shall not be included therein.

In other respects, keeping in view the provisions of rule 197, I have decided to follow hereafter the following procedure in the matter of Calling Attention notices:—

(i) All Calling Attention notices received upto 10.00 hours on any day will be placed immediately before me for my consideration. I will go through all of them and then select one of them for a statement by the concerned Minister at the sitting of the House on the following day.

(ii) The Members who have tabled Calling Attention notices on the Subject and the Minister concerned