

12.15 hrs.

**STATEMENT RE-THREAT OF  
INDEFINITE STRIKE IN MAJOR  
PORTS FROM MIDNIGHT OF  
MARCH 15-16, 1984**

**THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI K. VIJAYA BHASKARA REDDY) :** The Settlement between the Government of India in the Ministry of Shipping and Transport and the four major federations of port and dock workers, namely, All India Port and Dock Workers' Federation, Indian National Port and Dock Workers' Federation, Port, Dock and Waterfront Workers' Federation of India and Water Transport Workers' Federation of India on the issues of wage revision and the liberalisation of terms and conditions of employment of port and dock workers at the Major Ports, signed on 4.1.1981, was effective for a period of four years from 1.1.1980 to 31.12.1983. To evolve a new settlement to be effective from 1.1.1984, it was decided that a bipartite Wage Negotiating Team comprising representatives of the major Port Trusts, Dock Labour Boards and the Federation of Associations of Stevedores and the above mentioned four federations should enter into negotiations.

Accordingly bipartite negotiations were held since August, 1983. The four federations presented a joint charter of demands. The financial implications of the main demands contained in the charter were estimated at Rs. 163 crores per annum. It was reported to Government that the federations' demands were not realistic and that they had also not given any firm indication of their expectations. As the discussions were not fruitful, the matter was reported to the Government in the middle of November, 1983.

During the discussions held at the level of Secretary, Ministry of Shipping and Transport, the federations indicated certain demands as their minimum. The financial implications of these demands worked out to approximately Rs. 78 crores per annum.

I held discussions with the representatives of the labour federations. I appealed to them to keep the overall interest of the national economy in view and help in arriving at a reasonable settlement. After an indepth examination of all aspects of the issues involved, I offered an overall settlement at an estimated annual cost of Rs. 32 crores. This represented a 15% increase over the estimated annual wage bill of Rs. 216.31 crores for the year 1983. During the discussions held on 23rd February, 1984 the labour representatives rejected the offer and pressed for the acceptance of their demands.

On 29.2.1984, the unions affiliated to above federations and certain other unions served notices of strike on the port managements intimating their intention to go on an indefinite strike in all the 10 major ports of Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Visakhapatnam, Cochin, Mormugao, Kandla, Paradip, Tuticorin and New Mangalore from the mid-night of 15th/16th March, 84.

Despite the strike notice, in keeping with Government's firm belief in negotiated settlements of workers' demands, I again held discussions with them on 12th & 13th March, 1984. During the discussions, the labour representatives agreed to marginally reduce their demands by dropping two items, still leaving a balance financial implication of about Rs. 69 crores. I pointed out to them that this represented an increase of as much as about 32% over the existing wage bill of Rs. 216.31 crores and such an order of increase in any wage settlement of this nature, was not reasonable or realistic. I, therefore, again appealed to them to make their demands more realistic so as to enable a settlement being arrived at. But the labour representatives reiterated their stand and intimated their intention to proceed with the threatened strike.

My colleague Shri Veerendra Patil, Minister for Labour and Rehabilitation also held two meetings on 14th March, 1984 with the representatives of the four federations. He made a fervent appeal to them to postpone the strike at least for a week so that he could get

sufficient time to find a way out. He also made it clear that the strike was neither in the interest of the workers nor of the port authorities and definitely not in the public interest. Unfortunately, the representatives of the federations did not accede to the Labour Minister's request either.

I again reiterate the Government's sincere desire for arriving at a reasonable settlement of the port and dock workers' demands relating to their wage revision etc. and sincerely hope that they would yet desist from going on strike which will affect the national economy adversely.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY (Calcutta South) : Sir, we want a discussion on this.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN (Alleppey) : We demand a discussion on this.

SHRI RATANSINH RAJDA (Bombay South) : Sir, it is a very serious matter. Can we have a discussion on this ?

MR. SPEAKER : Give it in writing. You have to give it in writing. We will see later on.

SHRI RATANSINH RAJDA : Sir, it is a very serious matter. We want discussion on this.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY : Sir, it is such an issue involving lakhs of workers. So, let there be discussion on this. He has given the Government's version.

MR. SPEAKER : I do not know. Why do you do all this ? You have to give a notice first.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY : Once you agree, it can be done.

AN HON. MEMBER : You should first agree.

MR. SPEAKER : I never agree about anything. I will discuss, I will consider everything and then allow discussion. There is no question of a pre-agreement.

SHRI RATANSINH RAJDA : Sir, the work at the port of Bombay is being paralysed and our economy is affected. So, I request you to allow the discussion on this because it is a very important topic.

MR. SPEAKER : It might be, it is. I will see. Now, Shrimati Geeta Mukherjee.

12.23 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER  
OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

*Reported sufferings of the parents of  
dowry victim and apathy of police to  
investigating dowry deaths*

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (Panskura) : I call the attention of the Minister of Home Affairs to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon :-

*"Reported sufferings of the parents of  
dowry victims, apathy of police in  
investigation of dowry deaths and the  
action taken by the Government in  
the matter."*

SHRI RATANSINH RAJDA (Bombay South) : Sir, it is all ladies' affair today.

MR. SPEAKER : I think it is lady versus lady.

SHRI RATANSINH RAJDA : Sir, is it an accident ?

MR. SPEAKER : No, it is a pre-planned accident.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS, SPORTS AND WORKS AND HOUSING (SHRI BUTA SINGH) : When it is pre-planned, then it cannot be an accident.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI RAM DULARI SINHA) : Sir,