

fair to the banks as such; they have done nothing deliberately in this matter. I find it is not only the Bank of America but also one of the nationalised banks, which is involved... (Interruptions). I do not know. If you let loose your imagination many things can be said but I have to make a statement on the basis of facts as they were revealed. There is no question of taking over any bank as such.

SHRI BHOGEN DRA JHA: Against this particular bank. American Bank.

SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN: There is nothing against the bank as such.

12.22 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. ALLEGED ASSAULT BY BRITF PERSONNEL ON SOME PEOPLE OF JOWAI IN MEGHALAYA

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM): Mr. Speaker, Sir. Hon'ble Shri Jyotirmoy Bosu mentioned in the Lok Sabha on the 29th July about an incident which took place near Jowai village on the 11th July involving the personnel of the Border Roads Organisation and local civilians resulting in an unspecified number of deaths and injuries to both sides. The Hon'ble Deputy Speaker, who was in the Chair, observed that it is in the interest of the country that the Defence Minister should come forward at the earliest opportunity to make a statement as to what the facts of the case are, what action has been taken and what is proposed to be done.

The facts of the case as gathered upto now are as follows:

- (i) On 17th July, 1974, a signal was received by the Headquarters of the Border Roads Organisation from the Chief

Engineer Project PUSHPAK situated in another State about 200 miles away that on 11th July the camp of 408 Road Maintenance Platoon was attacked by local civilians between 4 P.M. and 6.15 P.M. by throwing stones and intrusion through barbed wire fencing as a result of which a number of Border Roads personnel were injured—three of them sustained serious injuries and were hospitalised in the Mission Hospital in Jowai. The signal further stated that the local police were contacted and protection for the camp was arranged.

- (ii) Subsequent report from the Directorate General of Border Roads indicated that on 11th July 1974 a local fair was held near the Border Roads camp on the Jowai-Badarpur road near Jowai. This fair was organised by the local civilians. In the afternoon, some of the local civilians taking part in the fair got drunk and entered the Border Roads camp forcibly by cutting the wire fence and attacking the Border Roads personnel and their families who were in the camp. As a result of this attack, three camp members were seriously injured. All this happened while the men of the unit were away at work. On their return, the men found the injured persons and removed them to the hospital as well as made a search for the culprits who could not be found. A report was lodged with the Police who have since provided a Police Guard as the unit does not keep an armed guard itself.
- (iii) The Meghalaya State Government was contacted over the telephone on 30th July 1974

and their report has now been received. According to that report—"as part of annual festival in Jantia hills called BEHDENTNKHLAM, a bull fight was organised on 11th July, 1974 at a place eight miles from Jowai-Badarpur road now looked after by BRTF. About 3000 people witnessed bull fight which ended at about 1430 hours peacefully and crowd dispersed. Suddenly about 100/150 persons of the crowd decided to hold football matches in the same field situated adjacent to a small BRTF camp. While second match was on, some BRTF personnel wanted to join the game but refused by local people and clash ensued. BRTF personnel chased to the camp and crowd pelted stones on the camp retaliated by BRTF. Meanwhile, on intimation sent to the next camp, about a furlong away, reinforcement of BRTF personnel rushed to the site. Clashes occurred at different places between personnel of the camp reinforcement and members of dispersing crowd. Many sustained injuries on both sides. Incident occurred at about 1700/1730 hours. Next morning two dead bodies of local villagers recovered in the area with marks of assault with sharp and blunt weapons. On receipt of information Superintendent of Police, Jowai rushed to the spot about 2200 hours 11/12th night. Cases registered from both sides and under investigation. No complaint of any misbehaviour by any one towards any girl/women in this incident.

Resolution adopted in a public meeting in the area on 24th July in this regard also

refers to unspecified past incidents of molestation of modesty of local women by BRTF personnel and general trespass into fields etc. but this has no direct link with incident reported above."

I regret there was a clash between the Border Roads personnel and the local civilians, resulting in casualties on both sides. The matter is now under investigation by the Police. The law enforcement machinery will no doubt take necessary action to bring the culprits to book. I may assure the House that the Border Road's Organisation will fully cooperate with the State Authorities in this regard.

12 27 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

(1) SERIOUS DROUGHT CONDITIONS IN ORISSA

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI (Bhubaneswar): Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the House and of the Government to the serious drought conditions in Orissa. Recently there was a PTI report which has been published in the *Patriot* dated 5th August and in other papers also. I quote

"Drought conditions have developed in varying degrees in all the 13 districts of Orissa on account of scanty, irregular, untimely and patchy rains during the last two months. The drought has brought in its train suspension of agricultural operations, unemployment and distress conditions in different parts of all the 13 districts. The prices of paddy and rice has also sharply risen during the past few weeks. The agricultural labourers in the rural areas have been worst hit by the drought conditions for want of employment."

The drought in Orissa is most severe. Famine conditions are prevailing. Recently I went to many parts of my