

[Shrimati Bibha Ghosh Goswami]

So many cases have not been reported still now. I want to know from the hon. Minister what they are going to do to make the statistics to give a real picture of the situation.

There is a difference between paper work and real field work. The most important thing is how and when they are going to have total eradication of smallpox.

DR. KARAN SINGH: As I have tried to point out in my original statement and in reply to earlier clarifications, the main reason why the smallpox campaign has not fully succeeded so far is the backlog in primary vaccination. I said it clearly. I gave the reasons for that. The programme has been going now for about 12 years. But nevertheless, we have not been able to gear up the machinery to cover everybody in the country, particularly those people belonging to more far-flung areas, less accessible areas and more economically vulnerable sections of the society. Therefore, it is clear that that is where we have got to give attention.

There are four separate inputs, finance, vaccine, personnel and transport, required to make it successful. On each of the four fronts, we are seeing that the necessary inputs are given.

As regards the question of statistics and their interpretation, education-wise, urban-wise, rural-wise, etc. it is certainly valid. But I would submit for the consideration of the hon. lady Member that at a time when the epidemic is in a very virulent form, our main energy has got to be directed towards bring the outbreak under control and towards actually meeting the situation. The details with regard to statistical analysis, the economic and linguistic break-up and all that will also come. That will take a little time. At present, it is a fire-fighting situation. We have got to meet it.

Then, the hon. lady Member raised the question about time-bound programme. As I mentioned in my statement, we still stick to the target of total eradication of smallpox during the Fifth Plan.

As regards the superstition, as to what can be done to get rid of superstition, it is not something that can be got rid of through a legislation. The superstition will go only when education spreads, when public opinion is created. In fact, I would appeal to the hon. Members of Parliament irrespective of all party affiliations, to help us in this process, wherever they go, to create an awareness and the importance of total immunisation and vaccination. I am sure, if M.P.s and MLAs all over the country help us in that, the superstition to which I referred will go quicker than otherwise.

13.00 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. UNDERGROUND NUCLEAR EXPLOSION EXPERIMENT.

THE PRIME MINISTER, MINISTER OF ATOMIC ENERGY, MINISTER OF ELECTRONICS AND MINISTER OF SPACE (SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI): Honourable Members are aware that at 08-05 hours on May 18, 1974 our Atomic Energy Commission successfully carried out an underground nuclear explosion experiment at a depth of more than 100 metres in the Rajasthan desert. This experiment was part of the research and development work which the Atomic Energy Commission has been carrying on in pursuance of our national objective of harnessing atomic energy for peaceful purposes.

Honourable Members may recall that on November 15, 1972, I had stated in the Lok Sabha that "The Atomic Energy Commission is studying conditions under which peaceful nuclear explosions carried out underground could be economic benefit to

India without causing environmental hazards". Exactly one year later, on November 15, 1973, I informed Honourable Members of the Rajya Sabha of the continuing interest of the Atomic Energy Commission in this field and also stated that after satisfactory answers to the problems of the possible effects on environmental and ecological conditions are available, the question of actual underground tests for peaceful purposes could be considered.

I am glad to inform Honourable Members that this successful experiment on May 18 has not resulted in any way in radio-active contamination of the atmosphere. The radio-activity was so well contained that a party of scientists was able to fly 30 metres above the site and reach upto 250 metres on the ground within an hour of the experiment without encountering any radioactive contamination. The Atomic Energy Commission is at present engaged in studying the result of the experiment. It is expected that this process will take about six months. In keeping with scientific tradition, the Atomic Energy Commission proposes to publish papers giving the results of the experiment for the benefit of the scientific world.

All the material, equipment and the personnel in this project were totally Indian. India has not violated any international law or obligation or any commitment in this regard with any country.

This experiment has evoked mixed response from various countries. While developing nations have, by and large, welcomed the experiment as a step in the research and development work carried on by India in the field of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, advanced nations, with some exceptions, have not shown equal understanding. The United States of America, while ex-

pressing satisfaction that the International Atomic Energy Agency's safeguards system has worked in regard to agreements with India and that the material used has not come from the United States, have reiterated that the policy of that Government is against nuclear proliferation. The USSR have noted that India has carried out a research programme striving to keep level with the world technology in the peaceful uses of nuclear explosion. The Chairman of the Indian Atomic Energy Commission has received a congratulatory message from the French Atomic Energy Commission on the success of the experiment. China officially reported the event without commenting on the explosion. The reaction of the Government of Japan has been to express regret for the experiment.

Reactions from Canada and our neighbour, Pakistan, have been sharp. While Canada is satisfied that India has not violated any agreement between the two countries, the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs has stated that the experiment represented a severe set-back to efforts being made in the international community to prevent all nuclear testing and to inhibit the proliferation of nuclear explosion technology.

The Government of India is unable to subscribe to the view expressed by the representatives of the Canadian Government in this regard. I have repeatedly reaffirmed our policy of using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and have specifically stated that we have no intention of developing nuclear weapons. The Government of India sincerely hopes that the Government of Canada will appreciate and understand the background of this experiment. I have already mentioned in the earlier part of this statement the fact that our Atomic

[Shrimati Indira Gandhi]

Energy Commission has been reviewing the progress in this technology from the theoretical and experimental angles. This intention was not kept secret and was made known to the world. If differences of interpretation have arisen between the Government of Canada and the Government of India, it is the Government of India's hope that they will be satisfactorily resolved in the discussions which are under way between the representatives of the two countries.

The Government of India is unable to comprehend the repeated talk of nuclear blackmail indulged in by the representatives of the Government of Pakistan. I have explained in my letter to Prime Minister Bhutto the peaceful nature and the economic purposes of this experiment and have also stated that India is willing to share her nuclear technology with Pakistan in the same way as she is willing to share it with other countries provided proper conditions for understanding and trust are created. I once again repeat this assurance and hope that the Government of Pakistan will accept India's position in this regard.

The Government of Pakistan has also made allegations about radioactivity having been carried to that country. I should like to take this opportunity of stating that this was impossible as there was no venting of radioactivity to the atmosphere and no formation of a radioactive cloud. Moreover, the wind was blowing in the opposite direction as it normally does at this time of the year and even in theory, any hypothetical radioactivity could never have gone to Pakistan. The wind pattern on May 18, 1974 was from, repeat from, the south-west.

There are several published reports by scientists from advanced countries on the potential utilisation of peaceful nuclear experiments. In 1970, 1971 and 1972, the International Atomic Energy Agency Organised Panel

Meetings on the peaceful uses of nuclear explosions and India attended all these meetings as a Panel Member. In the Foreword to the Peaceful Nuclear Explosions Phenomenology and Status Report, 1970 an indication has been given of the projects for which peaceful nuclear explosions could be used. The following quotation will be adequate in this regard:—

"Fully contained nuclear explosions (those not breaking through to the ground surface) could be used for many projects. On an industrial level pilot-scale experiments have already been made on gas and oil stimulation, with encouraging results. In addition, the use of cavities created by such explosions appeared to have an economically attractive future for projects such as underground gas and oil storage, and the storage of radioactive wastes from nuclear power stations and chemical plant, for *in situ* retorting of oil from shale oil deposits, and for *in situ* leaching of low-grade ores broken up by the explosion. The latter application is of particular interest to one Member State, India, who could by this means use her very large low-grade non-ferrous metal ore deposits, thus making her more independent of imports of these metals and furthering the national economy".

In view of the fact that we have just now carried out the experiment and the results will be available to us after six months, it is considered premature to talk of any particular technological application at a selected site. For any project of this nature to be considered economical and feasible, more experimental data must be available.

Honourable Members will notice that in the Panel discussions to which I have referred and in which most of the advanced countries have participated, it was emphasised that activities in the field of peaceful nuclear

explosion are essentially research and development programmes. Against this background, the Government of India fails to understand why India is being criticised on the ground that the technology necessary for the peaceful nuclear exploding is no different from that necessary for a weapons programme.

No technology is evil in itself; it is the use that nations make of technology which determines its character. India does not accept the principle of apartheid in any matter and technology is no exception.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA (Contai): Sir, I want to make a submission that this statement should be taken up for discussion. This subject of Atomic Energy is never discussed when we discuss the General Budget. So, I request that this may be taken up for discussion. This is the submission I wish to make.

MR. SPEAKER: That could be considered.

Now, Mr. Swaran Singh.

13.46 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. AGREEMENT ON
BOUNDARY DEMARCATION BETWEEN
INDIA AND BANGLADESH

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SWARAN SINGH): Sir, as the House is aware, certain portions of our border with Bangladesh have remained undemarcated. This is because differences had arisen with the Government of Pakistan on interpretations of the Radcliffe and other Awards and on individual issues connected with demarcation....

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour): This can be laid on the Table.

MR. SPEAKER: You can lay it on the Table.

SHRI SWARAN SINGH: I place my statement and also the copy of the agreement on the Table of the House.

Statement

As the House is aware, certain portions of our border with Bangladesh have remained undemarcated. This is because differences had arisen with the Government of Pakistan on interpretations of the Radcliffe and other Awards and on individual issues connected with demarcation. With the emergence of the sovereign Government of Bangladesh the completion of demarcation has been receiving the attention of both the Governments of Bangladesh and ourselves.

2. In the spirit of goodwill and accommodation that marks our relations with the friendly Government of Bangladesh, we have been able to resolve all the issues that had previously prevented demarcation and have signed on the 16th May, 1974, an Agreement with Bangladesh relating to the demarcation of the Indo-Bangladesh land boundary. The way is now open to complete the demarcation of the entire border with Bangladesh although naturally the actual process of demarcation will take some time.

3. If I may dwell for a moment on the main features of the Agreement, we have ensured the use of the waters of the Muhuri and Feni rivers to the nationals of both India and Bangladesh and have also secured the water-supply of the town of Belonia, while recognising Bangladesh's position in the Asalong area. The whole of Berubarf will remain with India while the Bangladesh enclaves of Dahagram and Angarpota will remain with that country. All other enclaves of the two countries will be exchanged. We will also lease to Bangladesh an area to connect the enclaves of Dahagram and Angarpota with Bangladesh while ensuring that our nationals retain the facility of passage across this area.