

over these plants in the public sector but every public sector is going in loss and it is well-known to the Minister... (An Hon. Member : Not every). Almost every public sector undertaking, I may say.

The idea is that it should be kept within the Bokaro steel plant management. It should not be with them. What happens? The Minister must be knowing what happened recently. 6,000 tonnes of refractory, both Indian and Russian made were damaged and destroyed in a mysterious fire at Bokaro steel plant last week. The loss was to the tune of a crore, according to estimates. I think a parliamentary enquiry committee should be constituted immediately to enquire into the matter. The officers, whether the General Manager or the Chairman if he is found guilty should be dismissed. Why this fire?

To my information it was planned sabotage. If these things go on how can we expect the completion of the Bokaro steel plant in time as Mr. Kumaramangalam said last time in Parliament? He is more or less, I think, in the hands of the bureaucratic officers because he is not a technical man himself. He may be a good lawyer.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The hon. Member may continue tomorrow.

13.24 hrs.

**STATEMENT RE : LATEST POSITION
WITH REGARD TO PAKISTANI
AGGRESSION ON INDIA**

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, this is my third statement on the war that has been forced upon us by Pakistan. I am in a position to tell you and the House that Pakistan has failed to achieve even marginally the objectives it may have set for itself when it launched the pre-meditated assault on our air-fields and ground forces on the evening of December 3rd.

On that evening, Pakistan converted its war on the people of Bangla Desh into a total war on India. Our troops moved into

Bangla Desh from many directions to eliminate the occupying forces from their outer defences. Contact has been established with the Mukti Bahini and the two forces are now acting not only in concert with each other, but under a unified command. In consequence, large areas of Bangla Desh have been freed from occupying forces. The House is already aware of the fall of Jessore, Sylhet and Comilla. The fall of Dinajpur and Rangpur is imminent. The Pakistani forces are pulling out of their strong-points in great confusion, disorder and consternation. The remnants have been ordered to collect in Barisal in the west and Narayangang in the east. Our forces are astride the Padma, the Brahmaputra and the Meghna. The Chief of the Army Staff has already warned the Pakistani soldiers to surrender to our forces as all their escape routes by land, air and sea have been sealed. The Pak Air Force in Bangla Desh has been virtually eliminated by our Eastern Air Command. Our Eastern Fleet has complete command over the approaches to all the ports in Bangla Desh. The people of Bangla Desh are heaving a sigh of relief, and our forces have been greeted with jubilation and universal rejoicing.

Our objective on the Jammu and Kashmir area and the Punjab sector has so far been to prevent fighting on our sacred soil and to eliminate Pakistani outposts threatening our security. The enemy has repeatedly tried to obtain lodgments in the Poonch Sector but without success. On the other hand, our troops have captured four important outposts in the Kargil area. The enemy continues to shell our posts in the Uri and Tanghar areas. The attempt to infiltrate Pakistani saboteurs behind our lines has been frustrated.

Pakistan launched a major attack on our positions in the Chhamb area. I have already informed the House that despite the difficulties of the terrain, our troops west of the rivulet Munnawar Tavi held on bravely to their positions for 72 hours. They were withdrawn to our main defensive positions, east of the rivulet, day before yesterday. The fresh Pakistani attacks on our position has been beaten back with heavy losses. The Akhnoor salient has been

[Shri Jagjivan Ram]

cut off from its bases in Pakistan. Our probing attacks across the border in Sambha area and towards the Shakargarh salient have been continued. There has been a lull over the last 48 hours in the Punjab sector.

Hon. Members are aware that the Pakistani armoured column which had made a bid for the area around Ramgarh in the Jaisalmer sector has been decimated. Its remnants are now being mopped up. In the Barmer sector, our troops have made further progress. A two-pronged attack is progressing towards Naya Chor. Our troops are already in contact with the defences of Naya Chor. Army Engineers have laid a railway track of six miles beyond Gadia Road, joining the two railway systems, that is, of India and Pakistan. A metre gauge train now runs from Barmer to deliver supplies to our forward troops.

Fighting has been severe but major tank formations have not yet been involved in it. Nevertheless, 109 Pakistani tanks have been destroyed and 9 captured in running condition. A sizable quantity of enemy's war materials has also fallen into our hands. We have lost only 49 tanks so far.

Since my last statement on the 7th of December, we have received information that Pakistan's largest submarine, US Built GHAZI, was sunk off Viskhapatnam on the night of 3rd/4th December. When one of our destroyers and a patrol craft were patrolling the approaches of this vital Naval base a submarine contact was picked up. Our ships went into the attack with underwater weapons and a loud explosion followed. The next morning, while naval authorities were investigating the area with the help of local fishermen, one of them picked up a life jacket. The information was carried to me. But I refused to announce that unless conclusive proof was given to me that GHAZI has been killed. Bad weather in the area and preoccupation of the fleet with operations in the Bay of Bengal hampered investigations. Conclusive evidence

was obtained only yesterday when three bodies were picked up. These have been identified as Pakistani sailors. From papers found floating on the surface, it was clearly established that the sunken ship is the Pakistani submarine GHAZI. There are no survivors. The three bodies were accorded a naval burial at sea yesterday.

In all, the Pakistan Navy has so far lost 3 warships, 9 gun boats and 2 submarines. The Indian Navy has suffered no damage.

I now turn to the war in the air. The Pakistani Air Force has been very hesitant to make any daylight raids over our airfields and installations during the last two days. Only during the night they have attacked some of our airfields. Their attacks have generally been haphazard and inaccurate. The losses inflicted on our airfields and vital installations have been negligible.

Our aircrafts, on the other hand, have been carrying out raids on enemy airfields, installations, marshalling yards, troop concentrations and communication systems, both in the western and eastern sectors. Our air sorties have caused substantial damage to Pakistani air installations, dislocated the logistics of ground forces, and destroyed a number of enemy tanks.

The Pakistani Air Force has so far lost 73 planes. Our loss amounts to 31 aircraft.

There has been a noticeable tendency on the part of Pakistani Armed Forces to bombard non-military targets. Our Defence Forces have strict instructions to confine their attention to military targets and avoid any harm to civilian population.

The House will, I am sure, join me in conveying the appreciation of the people of India to the defence forces for their magnificent performance.

13.42 hrs

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Ten of the Clock on Friday, December 10, 1971|Agrahayana 19, 1893 (Saka).