

12.01 hrs.

**CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER
OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

**Unauthorised Photographing of
Defence Installations in Assam
and Tripura**

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur) : I call the attention of the Minister of Defence to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon :

'Reported violation of security rules by American TV men in collaboration with an Indian photographer and pictures taken by them of army installations in Assam and Tripura.'

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM) : Government have seen a Press report alleging violation of security rules by some American T. V. men in collaboration with an Indian photographer by taking pictures of Army installations in Assam and Tripura. According to the existing instructions, in the case of foreign newsmen seeking facilities from Government of India for visiting refugee camps in Assam and Tripura, permission of the Press Information Bureau and the Ministry of Home Affairs is necessary. Further, for photographing any Defence installations, the permission of the Ministry of Defence is also necessary. Government also attaches a Liaison Officer with such persons or teams as have obtained necessary permission during their visits to refugee camps and other forward areas.

2. During the month of July 1971, no American T. V. team was given permission to visit Assam and Tripura ; nor has any American T. V. team asked for facilities either to visit refugee camps or Defence installations. No case of unauthorised attempt to photograph Defence installations in Assam and Tripura has come to notice of Government.

3. Any person taking a photograph of a Defence installation without permission contravenes the provisions of the Official Secrets Act and is liable to be prosecuted.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE : It appears from the statement that during July 1971 no American T.V. team was given permission to visit Assam and Tripura, but it does not make it clear whether after the refugee influx from Bangla Desh after the Yaha Khan regime's atrocities in Bangla Desh started and they began crossing over to India, after March 24, 1971, these TV experts and correspondents visited these areas in May and June 1971.

I accept the Minister's statement that they did not ask for any permission in July, 1971, but I would like to know whether the team visited these areas after 24th March, 1971, in May or June, 1971. As you know, there were foreign correspondents, TV men also, belonging to the various organisations, who went there to take photographs of the refugee influx and the conditions there.

It has been denied by the hon. Minister. but the newspaper says :

"It is learnt that some American TV men demanded both in Assam and Tripura the right to shoot pictures of Indian military installations in the deep rear of the border areas."

They demanded. The military might have refused. I accept the statement of the Minister. It says further :

"The argument of these Americans was said to be that in order to portray the real picture of Bangla Desh freedom movement, they needed pictures of Indian military installations also. The local army authorities bluntly refused permission to the Americans."

The hon. Minister did not say in the statement that they did not ask for permission. They asked for permission, and they were refused.

These American imperialists are in the habit of fishing in troubled waters. As you know, their arms supplies to Pakistan, the various statements issued by them, and last but not the least the attitude taken by President Nixon are a clear indication that they want to help Pakistan to wipe out the Mukti Fauj from Bangla Desh and also put hurdles in our day to day working as far as the refugees are concerned.

Then, the paper says :

"It is further understood that the Americans thereafter hired an Indian who had been working in a studio in Calcutta. This man was familiar with a relative of a top Officer of the West Bengal Government. He was introduced to the Americans by this relative. The Americans paid an exorbitant sum to the person and took him to Assam and Tripura in the hope that the army authorities there may be softer to an Indian. But this hope was belied and the army authorities refused permission to shoot pictures of any installations."

I must congratulate the army authorities for refusing, but there is a constant attempt being made, and if you read today's newspaper, you will find that the Centre, realising this danger, has decided that foreign relief workers should be replaced. The newspaper says :

"The Centre has told the West Bengal Government that all foreigners connected with relief work among Bangla Desh refugees should be replaced by Indians. The time mentioned for the process is a fortnight."

It adds :

"Additionally, according to our Special Correspondent in Delhi,

the Centre is understood to be unhappy with the ways some foreigners have chosen the refugee camps for the purpose of experimentation."

They are using the refugees for their own purposes. The whole object is to take photographs of army installations and prove before the world that the Indian army is actually helping the refugees and trying to enter the Pakistani border and create problems for Pakistan. This they want to put before the world to justify their sinister design of supply of arms to Pakistan, which is, according to me, the most unfriendly act.

Then, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether it is true that they are working constantly in Delhi through various agencies. It came out in many newspapers that some staff of the U.S. Embassy are constantly working for espionage, some of them were exposed and some of them were asked to leave. So, I want to know whether it is a fact that the Director of Military Intelligence was replaced yesterday or the day before, and if so, the reasons for the same.

I want to know about the removal of foreigners from relief work. The hon. Minister of Rehabilitation has conveniently walked out and I cannot put that question. I would like to know from him whether any foreigners asked permission before and whether such permission was refused, rightly; I must thank him for that. What was the purpose of their visit? I want to know whether in those border areas those men are constantly at work with the help of certain Indian agents who are working as agents of American imperialism and some other powers, with certain reactionary forces which are against the progressive parties in the country, in order to portray a false picture that India is having aggressive designs against Pakistan in going to the rescue of the refugees.

I would like to know whether these people have asked for permission, whether they came from America or some other foreign country, whether they are still in India and how many times they were refused permission, whether there is some truth in the statement that they hired some Indian for that Purpose and also whether they approached the Government of Assam and Tripura.

The last question is whether the foreigners have been asked not to go to the rescue work, whether they asked for permission and whether they were refused permission.

MR. SPEAKER: When will all this 'whether' stop?

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: My question is whether attempts are still being made to go to the border areas to take certain pictures to defame India and if so, what steps have been taken by the Government.

SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM: I had given the facts of the case. Quite a number of TV men from different countries—I have not got the details went to that area with a view to visiting the refugee camps; permission for such visits is given by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the Home Ministry. It is only when they have to visit some defence installations that permission from the Defence Ministry become necessary. I understand that quite a number of TV men visited the refugee camps in those areas and we have no instance of any photograph or television exposure having been taken of the defence installations.

When I received this news I have ascertained from my command at Calcutta and in the forward areas that there has been no instance of any photograph having been taken of defence installations. I am making further enquiries and trying to ascertain from the concerned Ministries the number of persons who visited the refugee areas for taking photographs there.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: Did they ask for permission and did the Defence Ministry refuse them permission?

SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM: No party approached us during July. For the previous months I shall have to ascertain since the time at our disposal from the time the notice was received yesterday was short, it was not possible to ascertain from every source whether some permission was sought and that was refused. I shall ascertain that.

DR. RANEN SFN (Barasat): Sir, the other day you made a statement in the House that Indian newspapers are quite responsible and their reports are by and large truthful. Therefore, the information that appeared in the newspapers yesterday perturbed us very much. But the reply of the minister—both written and oral—is more or less evasive. In this statement there are some dangerous things, not only indications but definite statements. It says:

“For photographing any defence installation, the permission of the Ministry of Defence is also necessary.”

That means, normally speaking, the foreigners are allowed to photograph our defence establishments, provided they get permission from the Defence Ministry. This is the meaning. Are we in a free country or not? What business have the foreigners—TV men or correspondents—to ask the Defence Ministry for permission to take photographs, particularly in view of the fact that today our country is in a very difficult position because of Bangladesh and Yahya Khan's black deeds there? It is known that espionage activities are going on the border. Only yesterday's paper reported that a railway line was blown up by the land mines placed near the border inside the Indian territory. It is also known that in Calcutta and other areas, some TV men, mostly Americans, are going round places, whether they

go near the border or not, that is not definitely known. But still these pro-American, imperialist agents and pro-Pakistani agents are not brought to book. When American imperialism has been proved to be the enemy not only of Bangladesh but of India, these things continue and it is more or less admitted in the statement. The next sentence of the statement reads ;

“Government also attaches a liaison officer with such persons or teams as have obtained the necessary permission during their visits to refugee camps and other forward areas.”

There is no sentence in the statement saying, that was the bad practice earlier, but in view of the present situation, the Government of India has totally banned any foreign correspondent or TV men appearing any where near the border. The oral statement was very apologetic and the written statement is totally evasive. This newspaper has made specific allegations about those TV men and no date or month is mentioned by this newspaper *Patriot*. Would the minister make a through enquiry into all these allegations not only through the State Government's intelligence department, because in West Bengal, the Police and the intelligence department are also corrupted in many ways by many political elements, but through the central military intelligence—I do not know whether there is anything like a military intelligence department—and make a searching probe into these reports that have appeared ?

Let the government not be evasive or apologetic. If such an officer, for some reason or other, had deliberately and willingly or unwillingly committed it, Government should take proper measures to bring to book those officers who are responsible for it. Then, in future they should make our border completely unapproach-

able to foreigners, particularly those American TV men and correspondents who are agents of American imperialism, which is the enemy of India and Bangladesh.

SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM : The House is aware of the American attitude on this entire question. I need not go into that. But I do not see what is evasive in my statement. There is nothing evasive there. It is a clear statement of facts. And I do not feel apologetic in stating facts. There is no need for feeling apologetic. I have stated the facts. He is interpreting the sentence that the permission of the Ministry of Defence is also necessary for photographing any defence installations. It means that photographing cannot be done without permission from the Ministry. That does not mean that permission to photograph is given. I would request my hon. friend to re-read the statement. So, there is nothing evasive and there is no need to be apologetic. We have said that during this period no permission has been given by the Defence Ministry and there has been no instance of any photograph having been taken of any defence installations in those areas.

It is also a fact that a number of civilian television teams from various countries have visited the refugee camps. As I have said, I am ascertaining from the Ministries concerned, that is, the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and the Home Ministry as to how many parties visited refugee camps in that area. The question of visiting forward areas has arisen only because of the concentration of a large number of Bangladesh citizens who have been forced out of their country and have sought shelter in our country and they are concentrated on our border. Whenever some foreigner comes and makes a request to visit some of the refugee camps to see the condition of the refugees as to how brutally they have been treated by Pakistan, I do not think permission should be refused in all such cases. Permission should be

given to visit the refugee camps in deserving cases. During the short time at our disposal the Ministry have contacted the various commands and we are making enquiries as to how many parties visited the area during last month. I cannot say more than this at this stage.

As for as the American attitude is concerned, the House is aware of it and I have nothing to comment. Our attitude is also known to the House.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE : What about banning photographing of defence establishments ?

SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM : As I have said, it may be necessary somewhere for some parties to visit refugee camps in order to see the brutalities.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE : I am not talking about the refugee camps. I am talking about defence establishments.

SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM : There also I cannot say that we will put a blanket ban on these things. That will be for us and our officers to decide where to permit and where not to permit.

DR. RANEN SEN : It is strange that it is for the officers and not the Minister to decide whether our defence establishments should be photographed or not. We take strong objection to this statement. I want your opinion on this. He makes a statement that it is for the officers to decide and not the Minister.

SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE (Calcutta-North-East) : The position should be made clear. Is it a fact that officers give permission that army installations could be photographed and the Minister should not be referred to ?

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Alipore) : Specially in the border areas.

SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM : May I make it further clear ? There are all sorts of defence installations and a distinction and discrimination will have to be made and discretion will have to remain with Government. Therefore, as I have said, I am not deciding here to put a blanket ban. The discretion will have to be exercised by Government.

SHRI P. GANGADEB (Angul) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, further facts are as stated in the same column of the *PATRIOT*, that the Americans have also taken a centre on lease somewhere near Agartala which is fitted with sophisticated telecommunication apparatus to enable them to have direct contact with Saigon and Bangkok. Moreover, America is out to help Pakistan militarily by supplying arms and ammunitions to them and, now as we see, is apprising them of our military operations on the eastern border—the Minister has said that it is not so. I would like to know from the hon. Minister the reasons why our military authorities could not detect this telecommunication centre much earlier to demolish it in time and what immediate steps Government propose to take to curb the sinister move of the concerned foreign agencies.

SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM : As I have said, no foreigner will be permitted to do anything which will have an adverse effect on our security on the border and if anybody does anything he will be dealt with properly.

MR. SPEAKER : Papers to be laid.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA (Serampore) : Mr. Speaker, I have got one thing to mention.

MR. SPEAKER : You get up abruptly every time. Without any motion I am not going to allow it, whatever it be, even for one minute.

SHRI DINFN BHATTACHARYYA
Kindly hear me and then give your ruling.

MR SPEAKER Please do not make it a daily practice. I do not allow it. Anything that you say without my permission will not go on record. I will not allow anything without previous notice

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA **

MR. SPFAKER Please do not make it a daily habit

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA **

MR SPEAKER You are not here to do anything against the rules

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA **

SHRI RAM DEO SINGH (Maharajan), **

MR SPEAKER Anything of which I have no notice will not be allowed. This is not to go on record. He is speaking without my permission

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA **

SHRI P K DEO (Kalahandi) **

SHRI RAM DEO SINGH **

12.30 Hrs

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

REVIEWS AND ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE
MINING AND ALLIED MACHINERY CORPN
LTD THE TRIVENI STRUCTURALS LTD,
AND THE BHARAT HEAVY PLATE AND
VESSELS LTD

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES
(SHRI SHAHNAWAZ KHAN) On behalf
of Shri Mohan Kumaramangalam,
I beg to lay on the Table a copy each
of the following papers (Hindi and English

versions) under sub-section (1) of section
619A of the Companies Act, 1956 -

- (1) (i) Review by the Government on the working of the Mining and Allied Machinery Corporation Ltd Durgapur, for the year 1969-70.
- (ii) Annual Report of the Mining and Allied Machinery Corporation Limited, Durgapur, for the year 1969-70 along with the Audited Accounts and the comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon, [Placed in Library, See No LT-662/71]
- (2) (i) Review by the Government on the working of the Triveni Structural Limited for the year 1969-70.
- (ii) Annual Report of the Triveni Structural Limited for the year 1969-70 along with the Audited Accounts and the comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon [Placed in Library See No LT-663/71]
- (3) (i) Review by the Government on the working of the Bharat Heavy Plate and Vessels Limited Visakhapatnam, for the year 1969-70
- (ii) Annual Report of the Bharat Heavy Plate and Vessels Limited, Visakhapatnam, for the year 1969-70 along with the Audited Accounts and the comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon. [Placed in Library, See No. LT-664/71.]

NOTIFICATION UNDER ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES ACT, 1955

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURAL
(SHRI SHER SINGH) I beg to lay
on the Table a copy of Notification
No. G S.R. 969 (Hindi and English versi-

**Not recorded.