

LOK SABHA DEBATES

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LOK SABHA

Thursday, March 1, 1984/
Phalgun 11, 1905 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven
of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MR. SPEAKER : Good morning to everybody.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY : You are happy after the Budget?

SHRI KRISHANA CHANDRA HALDER : Perhaps he is not happy.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL : Sir, you represent the whole House. So you are happy as well as unhappy.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE ; He is happy and unhappy Partywise.

SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER : Khandsari, Sugar and tobacco for pipe and cigar has been exempted from tax increase.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL : I am chewing tobacco.

अध्यक्ष महोदय : वाजपेयी जी, एक शेर

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यह दौरे सियासत भी क्या दौरे

सियासत है ।

ना बोलूँ तो नदामत है बोलूँ तो

बगावत है ॥

SHRI CHANDRAJIT YADAV : Is it on record ?

MR. SPEAKER : Is it unparliamentary ?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Beautiful things must always remain on record-

MR. SPEAKER : Now, questions. Mr. Reddy, you get the first question to-day.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY : For the first time I got it.

MR. SPEAKER : There is a first time for everything.

Murder of Indian Diplomat in U.K.

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*61. SHRI M. RAMGOPAL REDDY :

SHRI ANANTHA RAMULU MALLU :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether an Indian diplomat was kidnapped and murdered in U.K. recently;

(b) if so, whether any inquiry has since been conducted;

- (c) if so, the outcome thereof; and
 (d) what action Government has taken to avoid recurrence of such cases in other countries ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO) : (a) Yes, Sir. Shri R.H. Mhatre, Assistant Commissioner posted at Birmingham (U K) was kidnapped on February 3, 1984 and was killed on February 5. An organisation which called itself "Kashmir Liberation Army" claimed responsibility for this act.

(c) The Birmingham Police are investigating the case. The Government of India is constantly in touch with the British Foreign Office and the Birmingham Police and have provided necessary assistance to them at every stage.

(d) We have been informed that two persons named Abdul Raja Qayyum and Mohammed Sadiq Bhatti have been arrested in connection with the kidnapping of Shri Mhatre. They have been charged in court. Two more persons are being charged for aiding and abetting the crime. Police are continuing their efforts to identify and collect evidence against other persons who may be involved in the kidnapping and murder.

(d) The security of our Missions as well as personnel posted abroad is the responsibility of the host government in terms of the Vienna Convention. However, on our part the Government of India also take suitable measures wherever necessary. Security measures are under constant review and since the kidnapping and murder of Shri Mhatre, our missions have been put on maximum alert and instructed to seek assistance and cooperation of the local police authorities. In sensitive Missions various security measures have been instituted.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY : On that fateful night when our diplomat who was the cream of Indian diplomatic personnel abroad was kidnapped, they left a note in the office of Reuter at 0015 hours—early morning and the

Reuter, in its duty, has informed the Kashmir Liberation Front. I want to know from the Hon. Minister whether they have informed our Mission also. If not, why the Government of India has not asked the Reuter when they informed the Kashmir Liberation Front, why they had not been informed. The next morning in the press it appeared that he was missing. There was no mention of kidnapping. May I know, why was this suppressed by the Press in Britain and whether the Government of India has made any enquiries in this respect ?

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO : Reuter did not inform the High Commission. The High Commission came to know about it the next morning. And immediately, the High Commission went into action. We have not asked the Reuters why they did not inform the High Commission. It would be rather odd to ask them why they did not inform the High Commission.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY : Sir, I want to know whether this Kashmir Front Organisation is a part of the Kashmir Liberation Front and whether there are about 10 lakhs of Kashmiris in England and whether the police is making any efforts to detect amongst those people who are active in the Kashmir Liberation Front and whether one Mr. Hashim Quereshi and Aman Ullah, the leaders of the Front also reached the place about the same time and whether there is any connection with the arrival of these persons and the murder. I want to know these in details.

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO : Sir, the existence of the Kashmir Liberation Army was previously unknown. What they said on 4th was that negotiations should be carried through the Kashmir Liberation Front and, when the Kashmir Liberation Front leaders were contacted, they said that they did not know anything of the existence of this army and so, they would not be able to help. The so-called army did not leave any address or any contact number or anything. So, it was impossible to get in touch with them. Meanwhile, inves-

tigation was mounted in the normal course of law. The later heinous crime is already known to the House. This is the position.

So far as the Kashmiris residing in U. K. are concerned, I do not think that they are in such large numbers as suggested by the Hon. Member. There are quite a few of them; but, some of them hailed from the Pak-occupied Kashmir. It is very difficult to make any classification. That is the position. About Hashim Quereshi, I would briefly say that an investigation is on. Until it is over, it will not be possible for us to anticipate the investigation and say anything more about it.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Anantha Ramulu Mallu. Not here. Shri Fernandes.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Sir, I am rather surprised at the reply which the Minister has given that the knowledge of the existence of the Kashmir Liberation Army was not with the Government.

I would like to ask the Minister—is it or is it not a fact that in 1978, the Kashmir Liberation Army did make a similar threat to the then High Commissioner—not to the Assistant Commissioner but to the then High Commissioner—in England that the conversation between the man and the High Commissioner was taped and that conversation was later sent to the British Government? The demands made by the person who telephoned them in the name of the Kashmir Liberation Army were identical to the demands which were made then before Mr. Mhatre was kidnapped, namely, the release of Mr. Maqbool Butt and the plebiscite in Kashmir. And when that matter was referred to the British Government, what was the feedback that came from the British Government since then? In the original reply you have now said that it is the responsibility of the host Government, which is right technically and that you have now taken special

measures. What measures were taken between then and now in regard to these matters.

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO : Sir, this information which I have given is correct that the existence of the Kashmir Liberation Army is unknown in the sense that we have had no information about the existence of the army. If in the name of what is called an army somebody has made a telephone call it happened then, it happened now and it can happen again—that does not establish the existence of the army and it is about the fact of the army's existence that I have replied that it is unknown.

In regard to the security measures, security measures are taken both by the host Government and wherever needed by our own government. It would not be appropriate to divulge what security measures are actually taken in a given mission. It depends on the needs of that mission and, therefore, Sir, I would not be able to divulge exactly the measures.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : He had also asked what was the feed back.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Whether in 1978 a threat was made. Whether there is a taped conversation with the High Commission and whether the same was given to the British Commission—I want to know these facts.

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO : The inference of Mr. Fernandes obviously is that there is such an army which I have contradicted. About the specific point whether a conversation was tape recorded and the tape was made available to the British government in 1978, I am afraid, I don't have that information but it is a matter which can be easily verified. I can get that information and give it to you.

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI : Sir, the country is very deeply interested in knowing what kind of security arrangements are made in our missions and the Hon. Minister cannot just take shelter behind this that we cannot disclose security arrangements. Nor can he take shelter behind this fact that host government is responsible for the security of our missions ? I would like to ask two-three questions which are very important.

(Interruptions)

I want to know how long after the kidnapping did our High Commissioner come to know about the kidnapping ? Second, how long after this information reached the High Commission did the poor diplomat die and within this interval of time what steps were taken by our High Commissioner to get on either the radio or the press or the television and pretend to carry on negotiations with these murderers so that at least the police process could take effect ? Nothing has been done.

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO : Sir, this is not true. The allegation is totally untrue. The information as I have already stated came to the High Commission the next morning.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : At what time ?

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO : About 7.30 in the morning and they immediately moved in the matter.

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI : Moved means what ?

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO : They moved the British government and they also informed us but we received it at 2 O'clock because that is time differential and immediately we moved in the matter. They moved in the matter and Birmingham police had already mounted a search immediately the previous night and the investigation was started. But unfortunately before any-

thing more could be done we even deputed an officer from Delhi to go to London to assist in the investigation and before anything could be done even this officer could reach there the murder took place. (Interruptions) I am not trying to hide behind anything. Security measures in their very nature are not divulged. If you really want to know what measures are generally taken I am prepared to take individual members into confidence and tell them. With members there is nothing confidential but it is very odd and they will no longer remain security measures if I make a statement here.

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI : The most important thing I want to know is that after you came to know about the kidnapping what did you do to keep up the pretence of negotiation so that police could have time ?

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO : I have already stated that there was no contact number. There was nobody to contact.

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI : Why did you not go to the Press ? Why did you not go on the radio and television ?

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO : We contacted the Front which was supposed to be contacted.

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI : The High Commissioner has proved to be totally incompetent. He is responsible for the murder.

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO : That is absolutely wrong. That may be your opinion. But that flies in the face of facts.

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI : He should have gone to Television and said, we want to negotiate.

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY : I would like to put one question to the External Affairs Minister. This is a very unfor-

fortunate and a sad thing that has happened to one of our diplomats who was working in U.K. In this connection it has been stated that the Government of India has taken adequate measures. I would like to know from the Minister, even after the visit to the houses of Mr. Mhatre by the Prime Minister and Rajiv Gandhi and others, what is the help and assistance you are going to extend to that family? What do you propose to give?

SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO : To the extent that it is possible and it is within the power of the Government, everything has been done. Everything possible has been done. The Government facilitated the visit to Birmingham of the brother and other relations of Shri Mhatre. The P.M. called on the aged parents of Shri Mhatre. Specific benefits were extended to the family including exgratia payment of Rs. 1 lakh and continued payment of full pay and allowances as admissible in India to the family of Shri Mhatre till he would have attained the retirement age. Mrs. Mhatre, her daughter and other members of the family returned to India on 18.2.84. In regard to the body also there has been a question. The body of Shri Mhatre could not be brought to India since the British law requires a second post mortem by a Pathologist chosen by the defendants in a criminal trial. The position was fully explained to the family by the Coroner. The family decided that the body should be left in the custody of the British investigating authorities since it was important that justice should be done in this case. On Tuesday, 28th February, at 2.30 P.M. GMT a further inquest was done by the Coroner. The Coroner has given 14 days from 28 February, 1984 to the lawyers of the accused in which to ask for a second post mortem if they so want.

SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER : I would like to know from the Minister whether there is any connection between the kidnapping and murder of Mr. Mhatre and the execution order of Supreme Court of Maqbool Butt. May

I know whether Pakistan Government is obstructing to the investigation regarding the kidnapping and murder of Mr. Mhatre? Is Government aware that anti-India activities are going on and some groups are operating in UK and Canada? What steps have Government of India taken in the diplomatic field to protest against all such anti-Indian activities which are going on in UK and Canada?

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO : There is absolutely no connection between the two. Any insinuation to that effect I would like to refute with all the emphasis at my command. It is true that after Maqbool Butt's hanging certain statements have been made by Pakistan leaders glorifying him and saying he was a great freedom fighter, etc. I need not go into all the phraseology used and praises showered on him, except to say that that only gives us an idea of what their leaders mean, from their point of view, by a freedom-fighter, what their image of a freedom-fighter is. And in regard to anti-Indian propaganda we have had these experiences before, and whenever propaganda crosses certain limits we do protest.

PROF. SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY : We should have a special discussion. Please permit a Half-an-hour discussion over this.

SHRI CHANDRAJIT YADAV : I would like to know whether before this distasteful criminal act was committed, our High Commission in London had received any kind of threats or warning either from the Kashmir Liberation Front or anybody else in regard to the release of Butt. If so, which was the organisation from which those threats were received? Was any action taken on those threats?

Further, I would like to know whether the investigating agency of the British police is cooperating and having some kind of collaboration with the Indian Investigating agencies. If so, at what level? Now that we have come

to know about the existence of the Kashmir Liberation Front or the army, because this act was done in the name of the Front—they told the Commission to contact the Front, and they would deal with the matter—what information have we got about the Front, what their motives are etc.? What are we doing in that regard?

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO : As far as the telephone calls are concerned, from time to time we were receiving telephone calls not only in London, but at other places also. As the House is aware, there have been certain incidents of arson in The Hague and other missions. Immediate steps were taken to alert the local authorities and things were brought under control and thereafter there have been no further incidents. Coming back to Shri George Fernandes' question relating to the year 1978, the threat was made and the tape containing the threat was received by the High Commission. It was done by the JKLF, that is the Front, there was no army. The Front is very much there. Therefore there is no question of existence of the army either then or now. The man said that he was from the army. He said: "You deal with us, negotiate with us through the Front." The Front said that they had nothing to do with the army, they were not going to do anything in the matter.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : But the demands were the same.

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO : The demands were, more or less, the same. In this case, they wanted one million pounds, 7-8 more members to be released etc., and that is why, we got in touch with the Front, but they refused to cooperate, so, there was nowhere else to go.

SHRI CHANDRAJIT YADAV : You have not answered my question about the Front's activities and the collaboration of the British and the Indian investigating agencies.

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO : This has been answered several times. The JKLF is the Militant wing of the JK Plebiscite Front, which was formed in 1964. Their activities in the past have been holding demonstrations before the Indian Missions, in the United Nations, and despatch of representations on various issues indicating alleged grievances of the people of Kashmir to the Heads of Governments etc. The headquarter of the Front is in Rawalpindi.

Regarding the other part of the question, we are in close touch with the British investigating authorities.

PROF. K. K. TEWARY : I would like to know, whether this Qureshi, who is a convict for hijacking an Indian Airlines plane travelled from Pakistan to U.K. prior to this murder on a Pakistan passport, and whether he was detained by the British authorities for thorough investigations. Further, I would like to know, whether recently when these criminals were being arrested by the British Police, the Pakistan Government at the highest level lodged a protest saying that the Pakistani nationals, particularly those from the occupied Kashmir were being harassed. Will the Hon. Minister agree with me that this has wide ramifications including hand of the Pakistan Government?

This is obvious in the light of the incidents taking place. So, what has Government of India done in the form of a protest or some talks with the Pakistan Government? Only yesterday, I saw that the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan was in India. So, has this matter been taken up, or a formal protest lodged; or, are you thinking of lodging a protest, because it is now obvious that Pakistan—you yourself have admitted i.e. Pakistan Government had been funding the activities of the Front?

And about this so-called non-existent Army—It is not non-existent. It exists, the Army exists, and its acti-

vities are being funded by the Pakistan Government. Therefore, I would like to have a very categorical reply from the Minister.

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO : About the categorical reply the Member wants, I have already said that these...

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : This is a very important question.

MR. SPEAKER : I have attached more importance to this than to anything else.

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO : Hashim Qureshi who was detained on 6.2.1984, was interrogated upto 9.2.1984, released by the police but kept under watch ; travelled to U.K. with a Pakistani passport. As has already appeared in the newspapers, he was perhaps leaving U.K. He was stopped at the Heathrow airport, and taken back to Birmingham for interrogation. He is still under police watch.

About others also, I may add to what I have stated, that the two persons whose names I have just mentioned as having been arrested, latest, also hold Pakistani passports.

PROF. N. G. RANGA : Have you taken it up with the Pakistan Government ?

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO : I would not like to talk in terms of impressions. We shall take suitable action at the proper time.

Establishment of Coach Building Factory in Kerala

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*62. **SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA :**
SHRI K. A. RAJAN :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that there is no major Railway establishment in Kerala despite enough infrastructural facilities in the State ;

(b) whether Government propose to locate the proposed coach building factory in Kerala especially in view of the availability of skilled and unskilled labour, adequate supply of water and other necessities and the State Government's offer to give land free of cost and provide other infrastructural facilities ; and

(c) if so, action taken in the matter ?

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN
THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF) :** a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

The Government are aware that there is no major Railway Workshop in Kerala. Regarding locating the proposed new Coach Factory in Kerala, it has already been stated in the Budget Speech that a technical study has been entrusted to Rail India Technical and Economic Services Ltd. Therefore, decision regarding its location will only be taken on finalisation of the detailed Project Report, including location survey. Suggestion received from Government of Kerala will be given due consideration.

SHRI G. M. BANATWALLA : We are thankful to the Government for atleast being aware that there is no major railway workshop in Kerala. There are as many as five such workshops in Tamil Nadu, two in Karnataka and two in Andhra Pradesh. But there are adequate infra-structural facilities available in Kerala. Despite this, there is no major railway workshop over there. So, my question is : why has Kerala been singled out for this harsh type of treatment ? Will Government assure this House that atleast this time, the