

12.13 hrs.

ANNOUNCEMENT RE. REPORTS OF GOVERNMENT COMPANIES

Mr. Speaker: I want to make a small announcement to the House. As the House is aware copies of reports of Government companies are required to be laid on the Table of the House under sub-section (1) of Section 639 of the Companies Act, 1956. Hitherto the practice has been that these reports were first laid on the Table and then only circulated to Members, though under the Companies Act, as soon as an annual general meeting of shareholders is held by a company, its annual report becomes public property and extracts are published in newspapers.

To enable hon. Members to get copies immediately after the publication in the newspapers, the Minister of Industry has suggested to me that copies of these reports may be allowed to be posted to Members directly by the Board of Directors as soon as the annual general meeting of these companies is held and they may be laid on the Table thereafter as soon as possible formally. I do not see any objection in agreeing to this course as the proposed procedure will give ample time to Members to study the reports.

In accordance with this procedure Government companies may in future despatch directly copies of their annual reports to Members immediately after their annual general meetings are held. At the same time, they will also arrange to send 10 copies of these reports to the Parliament Library. As usual Government will duly lay the Reports on the Table of the House formally as soon as possible as required under the Companies Act.

12.15 hrs.

STATEMENT RE: FIRING ON ASSAM BORDER

The Deputy Minister of External Affairs (Shrimati Lakshmi Menon): Sir, I fully share the anxiety and concern shown by hon. Members in connection with the firing incidents across the East Pakistan-Assam border. The Prime Minister had given the House some details about this unprovoked Pakistani firing, on 23rd February, 1959 when an adjournment motion was sought to be moved, and also while answering supplementaries on 26th February, 1959 on a Starred Question by an hon. Member. I now give the following further information that is available with us.

Recent Pakistani firing on the Assam border has been directed against two areas: (a) the Patharia Forest, and (b) villages west of Karimganj, in the Cachar District of Assam. In the Patharia Forest, firing was directed in the last fortnight against Hartakitilla and Adamtilla. As the House will remember, firing in the Patharia Forest was started by Pakistan on 6th February, 1959. On 28th February 1959, one Indian border police constable was killed at Hartakitilla border outpost and another constable sustained minor injury at Adamtilla. No damage to property has been reported.

Pakistani firing in villages west of Karimganj was directed against villages or hamlets of Mahishashan, Madanpur, Latu, Sutarkandi, Jarapeta, Lafasil, Borapunji and Kurikhula. These Indian villages or hamlets are situated near the border and some of them are on the bank of the Kushiyara River. Pakistani firing in this area was started on 13th February, 1959 and was continued intermittently. Besides one person killed and 2 injured as stated by me on 23rd February 1959, one woman was wounded by a Pakistani bullet in Jarapeta on 26th February 1959, and a border security force constable