

12.13j 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 Kushi-yara 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

sustained injuries at Madanpur on 4th March 1959. Three Pakistani soldiers and one civilian raided the house of an Indian national Bharat Namasudia of village Ratanpur on 28th February 1959, assaulted the inhabitants, extorted Rs 1,700 from the owners and molested two ladies. The Government of Assam have asked the Government of East Pakistan to punish the culprits, return the loot and compensate the injured. Our High Commissioner has also been asked to take up this matter at Karachi. No other reports of damage to property have been received.

A ceasefire was arranged between the Deputy Commissioners of Cachar and Sylhet and firing ceased along the entire Cachar border on 8th March, 1959.

No encroachment of Indian territory took place in either of the two areas mentioned above and Indian forces returned fire, when necessary.

The attention of the Pakistan Government has been repeatedly drawn to these incidents of wanton aggressiveness of their border forces. Prime Minister had earlier mentioned in the House that such firing does no good to either country. Similar sentiments have been expressed by the Pakistan leaders but firing incidents go on. Under the circumstances, while we all regret the inconvenience and injury caused to innocent Indian citizens in these border villages, we have to take whatever measures are possible to guard our borders and our citizens adequately and this has been done.

Shri Hem Barua (Gauhati): May I know, Sir, whether the families of those persons who were killed—Munwar Ali—were paid compensation or not, and whether those women who were molested and had to be sent to hospital will receive any compensation?

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: I want notice to answer those points.

12.19 hrs.

GENERAL BUDGET—GENERAL
DISCUSSION—contd

Mr. Speaker: The House will now take up General Discussion of the Budget. Shri Rameshwar Tantia was in possession of the House.

Shri Rameshwar Tantia (Sikar): Mr. Speaker, Sir, when I was speaking about the implications of income-tax on companies you were pleased to observe that we will get a chance to speak on that later when the Demands for Grants are taken up. Therefore, I will now take up the excise duties proposed in the Budget.

Just now there is no excise duty on power-looms which are less than four in number at a particular place, and there is a small excise duty on powerlooms where there are 4 to 25 powerlooms at a place. It is all right, that there is no excise duty on those powerlooms where there are less than four. But the powerlooms are divided in such a way that even 40 powerlooms under one management are divided into ten units of four just to escape the excise duty. Apart from that, Sir, the cotton mills industry comes next to the cinema industry, which is the biggest industry in India. 40 cotton mills have closed down and more are to be closed. That is the situation. So, I request the hon. Minister to have a stricter check on powerlooms and if these looms are installed in bigger units, then those units should be considered bigger units instead of smaller units.

I now turn to khandsari. Much has been said about khandsari in the House, and I also want to add my humble suggestion in this regard. Some consideration should be given for relief from this excise duty on khandsari. Khandsari is a growing incentive among the growers of sugarcane in my State. Further the sugar industry will also be affected by this. If the duty is imposed just now on khandsari, the incentive will be taken