

matter does not relate to a particular party or to a particular Government. Whatever you do, it will be a matter of happiness for you. At least for once the Congress Government should do a good work since it is always doing wrong things.

SHRI S.B. CHAVAN: They will do after listening to you.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: The Governor has always said that they should prove their strength on the floor of the House. We do not say anything in this matter also. We are of the opinion that the trial of on the floor do the House is the best test of majority. In that context it must be reviewed and the President's rule should be revoked. Give a chance for the formation of a new Government. We have always demanded on the floor of the House that Mr. Lingdoh, who had been the Chief Minister and was removed, deliberately, should be given a chance to be the Chief Minister. Majority should be proved on the floor of the House. If some new situation emerges there, then the House or the Government will have an opportunity to think over it. If we start presuming and the Government also starts thinking that this or that will happen, then I think, it will be making smocking of the people of the country and the democracy. Therefore, on one hand, we firmly oppose this proposal of the Government on the other hand, we openly support the motion of Advaniji and Shrimati Geeta Mukherjee.

15.42 hrs.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Train Accident to 3 Pathankot-Bajjnath Passenger Train between Jawanwala Shahr-Harsar Dehri on Pathankot-Joginder Nagar Narrow gauge Section of Northern Railway on 7.12.1991

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): It is with deep anguish that I apprise the House of the traffic accident to

train No. 3 Pathankot-Bajjnath Passenger at about 15.00 hours on 7.12.1991 on the Pathankot-Joginder Nagar narrow gauge single line section of the Firozpur Division of Northern Railway. While this train with 6 coaches was on run between Jawanwal Shahr and Harsar Dehri stations, 2 coaches next to the train engine derailed and capsized at km. 47/7-8. As a result of this derailment, 27 persons lost their lives and 73 passengers sustained injuries.

Immediately on receipt of information about the accident, the medical relief van with Divisional Officers and doctors were rushed to the accident site from Pathankot. The Divisional Railway Manager/Firozpur also left for the site of the accident to supervise relief operations. Local Civil and Police Officials also attended the accident spot. The injured were admitted to the Civil and military hospitals at Nurpur, Jawanwala Shahr and Pathankot. Military personnel also assisted in attending to injured passengers.

The Member Engineering, Railway Board alongwith General Manager, Northern Railway and Senior Officers also proceeded to the site of accident to oversee rescue and relief arrangements.

I proceeded by special airforce plane alongwith Member Traffic to the site of accident. I visited the injured in the hospitals and also inspected the accident site.

Ex-gratia payment to the next of kin of the dead and to the injured is being arranged.

The Commissioner of Railway Safety, Northern Circle will be holding a statutory inquiry into this accident from 10.12.1991.

I am painfully conscious of the public misgivings about rail safety that are provoked by such unfortunate accidents. Every single accident is a matter of serious concern to me and all Railwaymen as it is to the general public. While I assure the House that the officials guilty of causing this accident through their negligence, will be severely punished,

I crave your indulgence to view Railway performance in the proper perspective.

Indian Railways operate about 14,000 trains a day with a workforce of 1.6 million Railwaymen working round the clock in diverse conditions and with equipment of varying complexity. The failure of a single human or mechanical component of this gigantic network can cause an accident. This is the magnitude of the challenge confronting the Indian Railways.

In view of the recent criticism about Rail Safety, I think it is necessary to quote certain key statistics which I do hope, will help allay the fears of the Honourable Members about the health of the system. In recent years, there has been a perceptible improvement in the safety record of the Indian Railways. From a level of 1130 train accidents in 1981-82, the number of accidents came down to 717 in 1985-86 and in 1990-91 the number of train accidents was 532, an all-time low. The incidence of train accidents per million train kms, which is the true index of safety performance has improved from 2.2 in 1981-82 to 0.86 in 1990-91. In the current year also the improvement has been sustained, there having occurred 365 accidents from April to November 1991 against 371 accidents in the corresponding period of last year.

It is unfortunate that some major accidents in the recent past have eroded the credibility of the railways in the eyes of the public. I wish to assure the House that every effort will be made to improve the overall safety performance of the Railways. Vulnerable areas in the system will be identified and corrective action taken. No mercy will be shown to officers and staff who are guilty of indulging in unsafe practices.

Shri Jaffer Sharief, all Railway workers and I extend our heartfelt condolences to the relatives of the persons who lost their lives in this unfortunate accident and sincere sympathies to the injured.

I trust the House will join me in extending heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families.

[Translation]

PROF. PREM DHUMAL (Hamirpur): I would like to know about the accident in my constituency.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Whenever a Suo-Motu Statement is made by the Minister, the rule is...

PROF. PREM DHUMAL: I know the rule is there but I would like to ask a clarification under some special circumstances.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: We have well established rules. No clarification can be sought after a Statement is made.

[Translation]

PROF. PREM DHUMAL: Rules are relaxed in an extra-ordinary situation... (Interruptions)...

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: In the past also there were very serious incidents of this type. Mr. Paswan himself raised certain question. So, we cannot discriminate between two Members.

[Translation]

PROF. PREM DHUMAL: I want to know something about the relief work... (Interruptions)... The people have openly said that the accident took place due to the very high speed of the train. All these facts should have been mentioned by the hon. Minister... (Interruptions)...

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If the incident pertains to your constituency and you are interested to know certain things, you can as well contact the hon. Minister. He will definitely clear your doubts. We have got a well established rule. So, let these things not go on record.

[Translation]

PROF. PREM DHUMAL: The State

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Government has announced payment of an assistance of Rs. 10,000/- each to the victims but how much amount the Central Government is granting for them?

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hitherto, the well established principle is that whenever an hon. Minister makes a suo-moto Statement, Members cannot ask clarifications.

PROF. PREM DHUMAL: Sir, I am asking it on a humanitarian ground.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is because you are asking a question based on a *suo motu* statement. Whenever a *suo motu* statement is made, the rules does not permit for asking clarifications. Prof. Dhumal, you do one thing. If you have anything in mind, you can ask the Minister later on. The Minister himself will invite you for a discussion. If you want to make any suggestion or if you feel that there are lacunae, certainly the hon. Minister will co-operate.

PROF. PREM DHUMAL: I want an information. Have they announced anything?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: At this stage, you cannot extract any information because this is a *suo motu* statement.

15.51 hrs.

STATUTORY RESOLUTION RE.

APPROVAL OF PROCLAMATION IN
RELATION TO STATE OF MEGHALAYA

AND

REVOCATION OF PROCLAMATION IN
RELATION TO STATE OF MEGHALAYA
-CONTD.

[English]

DR. JAYANTA RONGPI (Autonomous District): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I stand here to express my solidarity with the Motion placed by the Leader of the Opposition to

recommend revocation of President's rule promulgated in Meghalaya.

As I see it, this is not an isolated case, this is a part of the greater malady. It is almost ritual that when any new Government comes to power at the Centre - whether it is the Congress Government or whether it is a non-Congress Government - we find that there will be a series of changes or the process of destabilisation takes place in the States which are ruled by the parties other than the one that is ruling the Centre. This you could have seen in the States of Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir and the North-Eastern States. As was pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, it is mainly because of the wrong policy or wrong attitude or non-tolerance the other parties to remain in power in different States. So, that has led to a greater tragedy in the States of Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and so on.

So far as Meghalaya is concerned, I do not want to go into any controversy by commenting on the sovereignty of the Speaker or what the Supreme Court has given. It is for all of us to see. But what I want to point out is that the country cannot be governed only by the democratic principles by just going through the black letters of the Constitution. There are many countries in the world which does not have any written Constitution but still those countries are running in a better way than our country. We have a very big Constitution and we have so many rules.

So, the most important thing is the attitude of the Ruling Party, the very spirit of tolerance, the very spirit of acceptance of the multi-party democracy. If we cannot accept this fact, then there is definitely going to be a problem in so many other States.

So far as Meghalaya is concerned, as many of the Members including from the Congress have been saying that if you want that any political party should prove its strength on the floor of the House, then immediately the President's Rule should be revoked and status-quo ante should be