

**RE: LAYING ON THE TABLE PAPERS
CONCERNING BOFORS SCANDAL**

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA (West Bengal): Madam, I seek your permission to raise the demand that the papers that the Government has received from the Government of Switzerland, with regard to the Bofors scandal, should be laid on the Table of the House. I am making this demand because the Prime Minister recently, while attending an *Ishtar* party, has said that if a demand would be made, the Government would not hesitate to lay on the Table of the House the papers that it has received....(Interruptions) All the papers relating to the Bofors scandal, not selectively.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let him make the submission.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Madam, the issue is very important because the Bofors scandal has been polluting the political environment of the country over ten years. Aspersions have been cast, doubts have been raised and the names of important political leaders have been connected. But, it is unfortunate that the whole investigation process, the question of identifying the recipients and the question of taking punitive action against the people who have violated the law is being delayed. Justice delayed is justice denied.

Madam, on the 12th March, 1986, the final recommendation regarding the purchase of the Bofors guns was made, and before the 31st March, 1986, the deadline the Bofors Company had fixed for payment of the illegal gratification, the A.E. Services succeeded in getting the contract signed. A Parliamentary Committee was set up, and that Parliamentary Committee submitted its report on the 26th April, 1988. You will kindly understand not only the inordinate delay but the prolonging of the investigation process. This unusual prolonging of the investigation process has raised a number of issues, whether the investigation is being properly made, whether names of some people are being deliberately left out and whether there is an attempt to hush up the whole thing. It is for the dignity of the country that the whole thing should be properly processed.

Madam, the first set of papers were received by the Government of India in 1990, and the link of the A.E. Services with the payment of the illegal gratification was identified. It was known at that point of time that a foreign national, Mr. Quattrocchi, was associated with the A.E. Services. For many years, after 1990, the papers were not properly looked into by the investigating agencies. Why it was not properly looked into is a matter of concern.

On 26th July, 1993 it was known that Mr. Quattrocchi was one of the recipients of the illegal gratification. Unfortunately, even after knowing that, this gentleman was allowed to leave the country on the midnight of 29th-30th July. It was known to the Government and to the investigating agencies. Even after that he has been allowed to leave the country. The result is now well-known. He is now in Malaysia. We have been told that a team of investigating officers had gone to Malaysia to negotiate his extradition. It has also now been revealed that since there is no extradition treaty between the two countries, the Government of Malaysia is not going to oblige us by sending him to this country. Therefore, this failure is leading to a situation where the person or the persons, who have been revealed to have received the gratification, will not be brought before the court.

We have received a second set of papers consisting of 50 pages. They identify at least two persons - Mr. Win Chaddha and Mr. Quattrocchi.

The third set of papers, which are the most sensitive set of papers, would lead to certain conclusive evidence as to who are the persons who have received the money; whether Mr. Quattrocchi was a front man or Mr. Chaddha was a front man; whether the money was diverted from the accounts of some other persons. All this will be known when the third set of papers reach India after the disposal of an appeal pending before the Swiss Court. The appeal has been filed by a well-known industrial house of the world i.e. the Hindujas. Therefore, the very important question that arises is why there has been a delay. I would like to know whether the Government is going to assure the House that no further delay in the

investigation will be allowed. I welcome the statement that the hon. Prime Minister has made, maybe yesterday or day-before-yesterday, that they are not going to protect corrupt people in high places and that they are interested in bringing the people to justice. While welcoming that, I want the Government to assure the House — not outside the House, but inside the House. The Parliament is well within its competence to know whether it is going to be a reality. I would like to know whether the Government makes a promise that every effort will be made to see that the investigation is not further delayed.

Secondly, the failure of the Government to haul up the people who have been identified is very important. Why was he let out of the country and why does it depend only on a group of CBI officials to get that man to India? Why can't it be taken up on the diplomatic front? Why is diplomatic initiative not being taken in the way it should to protect the honour and dignity of the country? A country which cannot police the criminals, a country which cannot pinpoint the criminals, a country which cannot prevent the flow of its funds, loses its credibility among the nations of the world. Recently there was a survey done by an international agency. It identified India as one of the worst countries suffering from corruption particularly in high places.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Will you now wind up, please?

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: I am winding up.

Thirdly, what I am saying is that the papers that have been received, should be placed before the House so that the Members of Parliament know what is there in them. There should not be any secrecy; there should not be any hesitation. And if it is done in a secret way or if there is any hesitation, then a clear message goes to the nations of the world that our country has compromised. Therefore,...

SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI (Madhya Pradesh): All papers should be placed.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Yes, all papers. I am again saying all papers should be placed before the House. They should not be

placed on a selective basis. The country would like to know who the persons are who have received the money. The country would like to know who those people in high places are.

It is important because the then Foreign Minister of this country had to resign. He was carrying a letter to the Swiss Government saying that there should be delay in the judicial process in Switzerland. Therefore, on a number of occasions attempts have been made from the highest quarters to prevent the investigation and to delay the judicial process in Switzerland. Our goodwill, our credibility, our heritage and political environment needs to be properly protected. This can only be done if the Government is uncompromising. The word 'uncompromising' is not a statement. They should deal with the matter in an uncompromising way. I demand of the Government that they should place all the papers on the Table of the House.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE (West Bengal): Madam Deputy Chairman, I would just like to make one point quite clear in regard to the Bofors papers. The House is fully aware that we had a Joint Parliamentary Committee on Bofors. The issue had been debated by the whole country including the electronic and print media. I would not like to go into the details of the past, but certain new issues have come up. In the context of those new issues, I would like to urge upon the Government to consider placing all the papers on the Table of the House. If I remember correctly, the Prime Minister himself went on record saying that he would have no problems in laying on the Table of the House the papers which they have received from the Swiss authorities. Therefore, the first and most important thing is that these papers should be translated properly and authenticated by the Government and then these should be laid on the Table of the House so that Members of Parliament and the country can know what is contained in those papers.

The second point on this issue is we must have a structured debate so that we can get the Government's response. In this type of references, we may cover points, but there are certain limitations. We do not know what the Government has to say on this issue. Instead

of raising this issue casually and occasionally and without being properly responded to by the Government, I would request you to kindly have a date fixed for a debate according to the convenience of the Government. Because the Government is going to lay on the Table of the House the papers, the relevant documents which of course, would not stand in the way of investigation. But a systematic leakage is being done to create some sort of confusion. After a perusal of all the documents, one may say these are not definitive. But we are having a systematic leakage of partial information to the Press. To rephrase, my point is that all the relevant papers should be laid on the Table of the House. I had the privilege of going through the report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Bofors, though not sitting in the Committee. And, I found that they had examined this issue in detail. They went through the files of the Defence Ministry. They went through the information which was made available to them. Therefore, Members of Parliament had the privilege of going through those documents and coming to some sort of conclusion. Somebody agreed with those conclusions. Somebody did not agree with those conclusions. That is a different matter. Now, a new stage has come, a new initiative has come with the availability of papers; and whichever papers have been made available by the Swiss authorities to the Government, those should be laid on the Table of the House.

In regard to the third set of papers which have been referred to, they are very relevant. There are many other instances. For example, we would be curious to know the original contractor of the AE Services Ltd., who entered into some sort of negotiation with the Bofors; and who also helped them to get the contract. Why did they get only 20 per cent commission instead of 100 per cent? After that, what happened to the A.E. Services Ltd? Who are the owners? Who are the ultimate beneficiaries? Who are the end-users? All this information should be made available. Therefore, a dispassionate and structured discussion is absolutely called for. I would urge upon the Government to place on the Table of the House all the relevant information, whichever they have in their possession. Of

course, we cannot read the Swiss document. It must be translated and authenticated by somebody responsible in the Government to establish the genuineness of these documents. At the same time, in consultation with the leaders, please fix a day on which we can have a structured discussion where all the Members and representatives of parties can make their contributions. Thank you.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Madam, I support this demand of Mr. Pranab Mukherjee for a structured discussion. I am not raising it casually. I have raised it to draw the attention of the Government, to get the opinion of the Government. Let there be a structured discussion.

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA (West Bengal): Madam, after hearing Pranab Babu, I am making a few suggestions on which, I think, there would be no disagreement here in this House. I am making only four or five points.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Four or five points? Please just be brief.

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: I will make the points very short.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: When we have a debate as being requested by Mr. Pranab Mukherjee and supported by others, I think you can make many points.

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: I am not going into the details. I will just make the points.

Firstly, we all want that it should be revealed as to who the ultimate recipients are. There is no disagreement on this issue. Secondly, we all want that, whoever the recipients, they should be punished, dead or alive. (Interruptions). Why are you laughing? Even if they are dead.....(Interruptions).

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Naturally, one who is a culprit has to be punished.

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: Punished, dead or alive. If dead, his name should be brought in and certainly, the property which has been amassed from that money can be seized. (Interruptions)

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES (Goa): Why do you rush to conclusions without even seeing any paper?

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: I am not rushing to any conclusions. Please do not presume anything; don't talk with a guilty conscience.

Thirdly, there should be no interference from the Government in the investigation by the CBI. There have been some reports here and there. I hope they are not true. There should be no doubt in the mind of the people that the Government is not interested in punishing whoever is located in a high place. That is something you should ensure. *(Interruptions)*. Madam, why is this interruption? I do not know why they are agitated. *(Interruptions)*. Don't talk with a guilty conscience. Just listen to me.

Madam, the only other point I would make is this. In December, 1994, we had a meeting of the leaders of political parties. Mr. Chavan was also there. I think it was called by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs. All the officials concerned with the investigation were there. At that time, we were given the impression that the investigation would be completed in three months. It has taken another two years to complete. All these things that we know now were known even in those days - that Quattrocchi is involved, that Chadha is involved and that the scandal is linked with the murder of Olaf Palme. All these things were known even in the early days. But somehow, we, in Parliament, did not exercise enough vigilance on this issue. From 1987 to 1989, virtually nothing was done.* They said that there was no kickback, no bribe, nothing and no intermediary. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA (Bihar): Madam, that was a Parliamentary Committee. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI JOHN F. FERANDES: It is a report of Parliament.

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: It cannot be treated like this. He should withdraw that.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Ahluwaliaji, I will tell you. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI: It is a question of privilege of the House. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Madam, I am on a point of order. *(Interruptions)*.

*Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Just a second, please.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: While discussing an issue, Members are entitled to have their own views, strong or soft. The position is, it is their opinion. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: You may take a strong word. But don't accuse the parliamentary system.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: The Joint Parliamentary Committee did not make a right conclusion. *(Interruptions)* What is this?

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: Madam, he was a Member of the JPC. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI: Madam, the hon. Members has no respect for democracy. He has no respect for the Parliamentary institution. *(Interruptions)*

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, may I request the hon. Members to restore some order in the House? Please sit down. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI: Madam, either he should withdraw those words or those words should be expunged from the record. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Madam, he is a senior Parliamentarian. He should not have uttered such words. He should withdraw those words. Otherwise, those words should be expunged from the record. *(Interruptions)*

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Dr. Biplab Dasgupta, you are making your point. According to the sense of the House, everybody wants that there should be a proper structured discussion and the facts should be laid on the Table of the House. Now, what happens? We are not discussing the Bofors issue for the first time. At least, while I had been presiding, I had seen many times that this issue had been discussed and a Joint Committee of both the Houses of Parliament was appointed to go into all these details. Till the time the Committee gave its report, no such facts were available. Now, some new facts have come to light. In the light of those facts, a further discussion is demanded by you. Mr. Gurudas Das Gupta is requesting that those papers should be laid on the Table of the House. Mr. Pranab Mukherjee is requesting that those papers should be laid

on the Table of the House. Now, I don't think it is proper on your part, as a Member of this House, to comment on the work done by a Committee appointed by the two Houses of Parliament. Perhaps, certain facts were not available with them. Had these facts been available at that time, the position would have been different. Now, in the light of fresh information coming from Switzerland, which is available to the Members of Parliament, they are demanding a discussion. Now, what are we discussing? Today, permission is being given to raise this issue because something new has happened. Some new papers have come, to which the Joint Committee at that time had no access. So, besides those points, you can make any comment in this regard. Secondly, it has never been done in the House and we never criticised a report submitted by a Joint Committee. Please don't say that You voluntarily withdraw those words. Otherwise, I will have to expunge those words.

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: Madam, all that I am saying is this. *(Interruptions)*

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is just to keep the high dignity of the Joint Committee of Parliament that I request you to withdraw those words because the situation is different. *(Interruptions)*

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: Madam, that Committee was boycotted by the Opposition. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Madam, today, the BJP has boycotted the House. Does it mean that all the proceedings in the House are* ? What is this? That is a floor practice. *(Interruptions)* That does not mean that everything is*

SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI: Dr. Gupta, don't you have some respect for the institution of Parliament? *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SURINDER KUMAR SINGLA (Punjab): Madam, does he know that he is disrespecting this House? The JPC was a Committee of both the Houses of Parliament. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI: May I request him to listen to the Chair? *(Interruptions)*

*Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Why is the Member so agitated? He may have a different view on a particular Committee. But he cannot use a derogatory term. It is a question of a derogatory term and you have already given the ruling. It is the opinion of the Member to withdraw it or you are to expunge it. *(Interruptions)* There is a direction from you.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: May I have order in the House?

SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI: We listen to you.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You will listen to me. What I am trying to explain to you, Dr. Biplab Dasgupta, is not your mentioning that you are not satisfied with the observations of the Committee. But what I am objecting to and what the other Members are objecting to is that the Committees are constituted from within the two Houses of Parliament and it is not the only Committee which we had or we will have in future. So, let us not ourselves condemn our own Committee. Whether you boycotted it or not, you were a Member of the Committee. After all, it is a Committee of the House which you very much belong to. For the sake of posterity we should not make certain comments which reflect on our Parliamentary system and democracy. That is the point. You may be most dissatisfied with the Report. Nobody can insist on your being satisfied. But I can insist on you not to comment on the Committee's verdict. If somebody some day does that to you, you would be agitated. I don't want to have wrong precedents set in the House. That is my point.

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: Madam, the issue of public morality has become a very important issue these days. We should not appear to be doing anything which brings the whole House into disrepute.*

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: No, no. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: No. This is too much. *(Interruptions)*... This is too much. What is this? *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SURINDER KUMAR SINGLA: It is a ridiculous argument raised by the hon. Member. It should be withdrawn. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: It can never be accepted. It is not the view of the majority of the Members. *(Interruptions)*... It can never be said that the conclusion of a Parliamentary Committee.* It is the highest indignity of the House and I strongly condemn these words. They cannot go on record. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SURINDER KUMAR SINGLA: Madam, if I may say so, it was a deliberate move on the part of the Opposition to boycott it to build political propaganda. *(Interruptions)*.... It is a most ridiculous suggestion and he is abusing the whole Parliament. He must withdraw it or it must be deleted as per your direction. *(Interruptions)*....

श्री एस.एस. अहलुवालिया: मैडम, बहुत दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण बात है यह।

उपसभापति: वह कर लेंगे।

श्री एस.एस. अहलुवालिया: कैसे? ऐसे सदन में, सदन का अपमान करके वह सदन में बोलते रहें

उपसभापति: नहीं, वह अपमान नहीं कर रहे हैं। वह कैसे अपमान करेंगे?

श्री अजीत जोगी: मैडम, सबसे बड़ी बात यह है कि आपने आदेश दिया है लेकिन माननीय सदस्य उसकी अवहेलना कर रहे हैं।

श्री एस.एस. अहलुवालिया: सदन को अपमानित करके, सदन की परम्पराओं को गाली निकालते हुए वह बोलते रहें।(व्यवधान)....

श्री अजीत जोगी: आपने चेयर से एक निर्देश दिया है, उसको यह चुनौती दे रहे हैं, उसकी अवहेलना कर रहे हैं।

SHRI SURINDER KUMAR SINGLA: Madam, it was purely a political boycott. It was not to ensure morality. *(Interruptions)*... It was a total political boycott. They are trying to make political propaganda out of it. *(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I want to close this matter. *(Interruptions)*.... I want to close this matter. *(Interruptions)*...

श्री अजीत जोगी: हमको मॉरलटी का सबक सिखाने वाले यह कौन होते हैं? हमको नैतिकता का भाषण देने वाले यह कौन होते हैं? यह अपना भाषण कहीं और जाकर दें।

*Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

श्री सुरिन्दर कुमार सिंगला: कभी जनसंघ के साथ बैठते हैं, कभी उनके साथ बैठते हैं।(व्यवधान)....

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, I want to close this matter because we have not started the discussion on Bofors. It is only a request. The thing is that still we have not officially listed the discussion on Bofors. This was only a mention for which permission was given by the hon. Chairman. I don't think that it is proper at this stage to express very strong views about anything. I had cautioned you before. I am cautioning you again. Please make your point whether you would like to have a discussion or you would not like to have a discussion. The original Zero Hour Submission which Mr. Gurudas Das Gupta made reads, "Laying on the Table of the House papers concerning Bofors scandal". Now, in this respect, do you want these papers should be laid on the Table of the House or not? How the discussion should take place, you are free to do it when it is listed for discussion. I have other names also.

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: I agree with you, Madam.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay, you have agreed with me. Then you can take your seat.

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: I support this proposal that all the papers should be laid on the Table of the House. The only thing that I added is that the CBI should be allowed to perform its job without any interference from anybody. Let there be no suspicion in any quarter because people are unhappy with the way in which things have been done in the last ten years. Let no suspicion arise out of the way in which we function. There should be no interference with the functioning of the CBI.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you. Shri S.S. Ahluwalia.

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: Madam, he has not withdrawn the remarks. Are you expunging the remarks made on the Committee?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I will do that. He understood what the meaning was. *(Interruptions)*... He realises at this point of time what was the limit of one's contribution on the floor of the House. We have not started the discussion. What happened and what did not happen can be discussed in a proper manner. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: Are you expunging it, Madam?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I will do that. Don't repeat.

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: His remarks on the JPC should be expurgated.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I will do that. It is not a question of what a Member says. The question is your expression to protect the Parliamentary Committees in the past and in the future and that they should be respected. That has been restored. That is the dignity of the House and I am sure he will not disagree with it.

श्री एस. एस. अहलुवालिया: उपसभापति महोदय, माननीय गुरुदास दासगुप्त जी ने बोफोर्स के पेपर्स को सदन के पटल पर रखने की जो मांग की है, मैं उसका समर्थन करता हूँ। हमारे नेता प्रणव मुखर्जी ने इसका समर्थन करते हुए ठीक ही कहा है कि सदन में इस पर भरपूर बहस होनी चाहिए और सरकार भी यहां उपस्थित रहनी चाहिए इसका जवाब देने के लिए। कम से कम सरकार बताए कि उन्होंने आज तक क्या किया है और ऐसा क्या नया उनको मिल गया है जिसके आधार पर ये अटकलें लगाई जा रही है?

महोदय, पिछले 10 बरसों से क्या हो रहा है कि एक विशेष दल यह साबित करने की कोशिश में लगा हुआ है कि कोई दूसरा दल भ्रष्टाचार में लिप्त हैं। इस तरह से हम एक गलत परंपरा को जन्म दे रहे हैं। हम लोग एक-दूसरे पर आरोप-प्रत्यारोप लगा रहे हैं जब कि हमारे पास कोई ऐसा प्रमाण नहीं है। अभी जो यह 500 पेज का दस्तावेज स्विट्जरलैंड से यहां आया है, क्या उसका ट्रांसलेशन अंग्रेजी में हो गया है? एक दिन पहले प्रधानमंत्री महोदय ने पत्रकारों से कहा था कि—“You have waited for ten years. Wait for some more time. Something will come out.”

और उसके दूसरे दिन ही बहुत जल्दी में एक पत्रकार सम्मेलन बुलाकर दो नाम दे दिए गए और बता दिया गया कि ये लोग इसमें लिप्त हैं और इंटरपोल को भी सतर्क कर दिया गया। आज आप सबने अखबार में पढ़ा होगा कि मलेशिया के ऐडमिनिस्ट्रेशन ने कहा है कि— You people are accusing this person on flimsy grounds.

अब पता नहीं इसमें उनको क्या फिल्म्सी ग्राउंड लगता है और क्या प्रूफ उनको चाहिए किसी को गिरफ्तार करने के लिए?

हम इस चीज को बड़े साफ शब्दों में कहना चाहते हैं कि अगर इस भ्रष्टाचार में कोई भी लिप्त है तो उसको बचाने की हमारी कोई कोशिश नहीं है। जितने राष्ट्र के हितैषी आप उधर बैठने वाले लोग हैं, उतने ही हितैषी उधर बैठने वाले हम लोग भी हैं। हम लोग चाहते हैं कि जो भ्रष्टाचारी है, जो इसमें लिप्त है, उसका नाम उजागर हो, सामने आए। पर उसके लिए एक तरीका है। उसके लिए जो कुप्रचार हो रहा है और जो अफवाहें फैलाई जा रही हैं कि अमुक-अमुक व्यक्तियों का नाम है, इस तरह की अफवाहों रोकने की जरूरत है। इस तरह की अफवाहें सरकार की ओर से फैलाई जा रही हैं और स्वयं मंत्रियों द्वारा ऐसा प्रचार किया जा रहा है।

महोदय, प्रधानमंत्री ने देश की जनता से यह वादा किया है कि इस दस्तावेज में जिसका नाम निकलेगा, उसको वे उजागर करेंगे। तो सदन की परंपरा को मद्देनजर रखते हुए प्रधानमंत्री को सदन में आना चाहिए और इसे सदन के पटल पर रखना चाहिए। इस पर यहां बहस होनी चाहिए ताकि हम एक रास्ता निकाल सकें और इन अफवाहों के माध्यम से भारत का जो नाम विदेशों में नीचे गिरता है, उस पर रोक लग सकें।

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now Special Mentions. Shri Yerra Narayanaswamy.

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: Madam, is it a Zero Hour mention or a Special Mention?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Whatever is listed here.

DR. JAGANNATH MISHRA: Madam, it is a Zero Hour mention.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That is the same thing.

जीरो-आवर तो खत्म हो गया साढ़े बारह बजे।

I am calling the names which are listed here, whether you call it a Zero Hour mention or a Special Mention.

SHRI R.K. KUMAR (Tamil Nadu): Madam, on behalf of my party I want....

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: So far as this matter is concerned, you can speak on behalf of your party when the discussion takes place.

SHRI R.K. KUMAR: Madam, I will take only one minute. I support this demand.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You have supported the demand. Okay.

SHRI R.K. KUMAR: Madam....

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I have called Shri Yerra Narayanaswamy.

SHRI R.K. KUMAR: I will take only one minute.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We have to run this House. Mr. Kumar, if you wanted to speak on this subject you should have given your name. You did not give your name. I have called only those Members whose names are listed here. Many Members have raised their hands. Just because of you I should not deprive those persons to whom the Chairman has given permission.

SHRI R.K. KUMAR: Madam, I wholly support the demand of laying the papers on the Table because we have been searching a black cat in a dark room all these years with a lot of innuendos and insinuation. The use of words like illegal gratification and punishment to those whether dead or alive can be avoided if the papers are laid on the Table very soon.

RE: NEED TO SET UP REGIONAL OFFICE OF ONGC AT RAJAHMUNDRY IN ANDHRA PRADESH

SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY (Andhra Pradesh): Madam, since last three weeks an agitation is going on in Krishna-Godavari Basin consisting of three districts, i.e. East Godavari, West Godavari and Krishna districts of Andhra Pradesh for setting up a regional office of ONGC at Rajahmundry in Andhra Pradesh. The agitators, who include MLAs and representatives of the people, are demanding from the Government of India that a regional office be set up in Andhra Pradesh itself. The Krishna-Godavari Basin in Southern India has a great potential and abundant reserves of natural gas and oil.

This area is neglected by the ONGC. Every decision regarding the Krishna-Godavari basin has to be finalised by the ONGC office at Chennai that is, Madras. Local people are not being recruited even for the Class IV posts and technical posts. The agitators are obstructing the flow of natural gas to industries and power plants. The agitation has been going on for the last 20 days. Neither the ONGC, nor the Government of India has conceded their demands. It is a justified demand. In 1995, there was a blow-out in Pasarlapudi in East Godavari. It could not be controlled for 40 days.

At that time the then Petroleum Minister visited the place. He contacted the then Chief Minister, Shri N.T. Rama Rao and assured him that a regional office of the ONGC would be set up in Rajahmundry and the local people would be recruited. Roads have been damaged. In the Krishna-Godavari basin, roads and bridges are damaged because of plying of heavy vehicles of the ONGC. The Government of India and the Petroleum Ministry should concede the demand and set up a regional office of the ONGC in Andhra Pradesh. Thank you.

SHRI N. GIRIPRASAD (Andhra Pradesh): Madam, two or three days back there was another blow-out in the Godavari basin. An oil well has caught fire and the Government is not able to control it. They are now inviting foreign experts to control the fire. I hope they will be able to put out the fire at the earliest. One reason for such blow-outs in the Krishna-Godavari basin is that the regional office is situated very far away from the place. The regional office is in Madras. Because of this, oil exploration and location of hydro-carbon resources is also getting affected. An ONGC office is a must at Rajahmundry because it has vast resources of oil and natural gas. These need to be developed. There should be a regional office at the nearest possible site. Rajahmundry has already been identified and a promise to this effect had already been made. As far as I remember, Rs. 7 crores for construction of building and staff quarters for the ONGC staff had been budgeted. About 180 acres of land was also acquired for this purpose. But on some technical grounds money was not released and construction activity was given up. There is a feeling that this area is being neglected. The Ravva oil field which is capable of yielding 1000 tonnes of oil per day is being handed over to a private party for development purposes. The ONGC is also offering the GF16 oil field which is also capable of producing 1000 tonnes of oil per day to a private party. This is being done in the name of joint venture. To reduce operational cost, the ONGC is doing this. Oil fields are being developed and then handed over to private parties. My belief is that private people are not taking proper precautions against fire accidents. Keeping in view all these things, it is time the Government of India set up a regional office at Rajahmundry. The people's agitation is justified. I have also written letters to the Prime Minister in this respect. I hope the Government