

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Collision between 6019 Madras—Kanya Kumari Express and an empty goods train on the 14th May 1995 between Lokur-Danishpet stations of Jolarpettai to Salem Junction section of Southern Railway.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF):

Madam, I beg to lay on the Table a suo motu statement with regard to the accident involving train No. 6019 Madras—Kanyakumari Express and an empty goods train on 14.5.95.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Hon. Members, have you got copies of the statement? Mr. Minister, please read out the statement.

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF: Madam, it is with great anguish that I apprise the House of an unfortunate collision between train No. 6019 Madras—Kanyakumari Express and an empty goods train at about 22.15 hrs. on 14.5.95 between Lokur-Danishpet stations on Jolarpettai — Salem Junction section of Southern Railway. The trains between Lokur-Danishpet are worked on twin single line system. While the 6019 Madras—Kanyakumari Express was on run on 'A' line between these stations, unfortunately, the empty goods train entered the same line from Danishpet station and both the trains collided in the block section. As a result of this accident, eight coaches of Express train, six wagons of goods train and engines of both the trains derailed and capsized. In this accident, 50 persons including 5 members of the crew died and 65 received injury. On receipt of information about the accident, medical relief trains from Erode and Jolarpettai with the team of railway doctors rushed to the site of accident to render medical assistance. Local doctors also rendered

medical help to the injured persons. The injured were later admitted in Government Hospital, Salem where they are progressing.

Chairman, Railway Board, Member (Electrical), Railway Board, General Manager, Southern Railway, Divisional Manager, Palghat and other senior officers reached the site to supervise the rescue and relief operations.

I myself visited the site of accident and met the injured in the Government Hospital at Salem. I have also issued instructions to Railway officers to render all possible help to the next of kin of those dead and to injured persons. It was really a sad and unfortunate accident. The Commissioner of Railway Safety will hold statutory enquiry into the cause of accident.

Ex-gratia payment has been made to the next of kin of those who died and to the injured persons. This is in addition to the amount payable as compensation under provisions of the Railways Act.

All Railways workers and I express our deep condolences to the bereaved families and also express sincere sympathies to the injured.

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

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Mr. Minister, the Members will like to have some clarifications. Hon. Members, I will be able to give two-three minutes if you want to ask clarifications.

SHRI K. K. VEERAPPAN (Tamil Nadu): Madam, this is the second biggest train accident in Tamil Nadu in the recent times. There are controversial opinions relating to the accident. The Railway Minister attributed the reasons, and I quote, "It

[Shri K. K. Keerappan]

is a human failure. Prima facie it seems that the driver of the goods train from Erode to Jolarpettai had ignored the signal." But, the official version found fault with the system adopted by the Railway Administration. They are using this Danishpet—Lokur line both for up and down trains for their own convenience, whereas most of the other tracks are used as single line. There only one-direction trains permitted.

Madan, according to the newspaper reports, the Chief Secretary of Tamil Nadu had said that it was because of the signal failure that this accident had taken place. Regarding the number of deaths, it is reported that only 60 persons were killed and other 65 were injured. But I have received a message from my native place that the number of deaths would be more than 100 and the number of injured would be more than two hundred. Nearly 100 people have been seriously injured. So, in the newspaper reports the number of deaths is 60 and the Minister in his statement has given the number as fifty. But, the actual number of death will be more than one hundred. I have received this information from my native place because I belong to that area. The impact was such that as the Second Class compartment was burnt, it was crushed under the AC II Tier Sleeper. So, the number of deaths will be definitely higher. The hon. Railway Minister immediately visited the spot and ordered an inquiry by Commissioner of Railway Safety.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Please try to be brief.

SHRI K. K. VEERAPPAN: But, I would request the Minister to make arrangements for a judicial inquiry to find out the exact reasons of this accident. The Minister has announced an *ex gratia* payment for the families

of the victims. This amount is very very less. Even the State Government has ordered Rs. 10,000/- and Rs. 5,000/- I want that it should be more. It should be at least rupees one lakh. For seriously injured persons, you have announced only Rs. 2,000/-. The condition of these persons is very critical. They should also be given more compensation amount. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he will go into the reasons for this accident. I would also like him to take effective steps to prevent recurrence of such accidents.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): May I tell the hon. Members that there is a long list before me? Everybody would like to speak, but the Minister has some urgent work. Therefore, I would allow only those Members who come from this State.

SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM (Uttar Pradesh): Only one or two minutes...(Interruptions)... This is a very simple statement.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Okay. Shri Vayalar Ravi.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI (Kerala): Madam, the tragedy has occurred in a place where we travel very frequently. Madam, this is not the first accident in this year. Earlier, the Madras-bound Kanyakumari Express also met with an accident. Last year, there was an accident between the two trains coming from Kurala and Cochin. This Salem and Jolarpettai sector has become accident-prone. We must enquire into as to why this happened. There is an important sentence in the Statement of the Minister. I will read it and I need a clarification for it. I quote,

'The trains between Lokur-Danishpet are worked on twin single line system. It has been stated by the hon. Minister that this is done for administrative convenience. You have simply made a statement that '6019 Madras-Kanya Kumari Express was run on 'A' line between these stations, unfortunately, the empty goods train entered the same line from Danishpet station and both the trains collided in the block section.' How did it enter? Madam, here the basic question is, how the goods train could enter it? Is it because of a double line? If yes, why is there a second line? This kind of human failure as mentioned in the press statement is an unfortunate incident. Madam, this is a serious thing and I want the Minister to clarify this; not only clarification, but action should be taken. Action should be taken because this kind of a thing cannot be repeated. I want to make one point about drinking. Drinking has become a habit with the railway employees while on duty. It is a dangerous thing. Even when we travel in AC compartments, we see the TTE drinks, the attendant drinks, everybody drinks. This is a habit and I believe there is no check. This is happening even on aircraft. And discipline has gone down, maybe, because of trade unionism. I am also a trade unionist. A very delicate Trade unionism might put me into trouble but this kind of action shall not be allowed to occur again and again. So, even if there is a minor accident, even if it is a ground staff or a running train staff who is involved in the indiscipline, I wish the Minister makes some kind of a method to check liquor drinking in the trains and stops this menace for ever. Very stringent punishment should be given to the people who drink and also to see what we can do on this section, Salem-Jolarpettai, where we travel, because this is becoming an accident-

prone area. I want the Minister to take certain steps to correct and prevent such accidents.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY (Pondicherry): Madam, Vice-Chairman, it is a very gruesome accident which was reported by the hon. Minister. It is a human error. Madam, when we go through the Statement it is very clear that the goods train and also the passenger train were on the same line and that was the cause of the accident. Madam, I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to who are responsible for maintaining the signals and to see that the on-going train and the incoming train have to be diverted according to the different directions. My point is, the signal man has been suspended. That is the only action which has been taken. But the Station-Masters of the respective stations are also responsible. After having got the information that the trains are reaching there and the trains have to proceed, the Station-Masters also have to give the directions. Unfortunately those people have been let off and no action has been taken against them. It is patently clear that this is not only a human error, not only a human failure, but it is a wanton act on the part of the Railway administration, especially the railway station-masters of the two respective stations. Madam, according to the press report, more than 65 people died. But the Minister's statement states that about 50 persons have died. There is a total contradiction between the statement made by the Minister and what has appeared in the newspapers. Even in the TV News this morning, I heard that 60 people have died. The news item says that 65 people have died. But the Minister's statement says that 50 persons have died. Therefore, I would like to know: What is the exact number of people who have died?

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI (Tamil Nadu): More than 100. There is one coach buried under an A.C. coach. It has not been taken out. After it is taken out, the death toll would increase. That too, it is an unreserved compartment. I think in that coach alone, more than 80 people would have been there.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Mr. Virumbi, I have not called you to speak. Let him complete. When your turn comes, you can say whatever you want to say.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Such kind of irresponsible statements should not be made. They can very well say that they do not have the exact figure. They can say that this is as per the information available with them. But the statement says: In this accident, 50 persons, including 5 members of the crew died and 65 received injury. This is what the statement says. However, when we read the newspapers, we find that there are still a number of bodies which remain buried under the debris and which have not been taken out. That is why I would like to know from the hon. Minister: What is the actual number? Then, how many people have been rescued?

Another thing is, Madam, this accident took place at 10.15 p.m. My information is that the railway officials, for the purpose of rescue operations, reached the spot after six hours. I would like to know: What was the reason for this delay? On the one side, the Jolarpettai Junction is there, and on the other side, the Salem Junction is there. Therefore, they could reach the spot promptly. But, there has been a delay of six hours. I do not think the Railway Minister would be in a position to explain to the House this delay. I would like to know: What was the reason for the delay in the railway officials reaching the spot to undertake rescue operations and in saving the persons who were injured?

My last point is in regard to compensation. Madam, even the State Government is giving more compensation to the next of kin of those who have died. I know the reason which would be given by the Minister. He would say that this is the criterion we have fixed for the purpose of giving compensation to the families of those persons who have died and those who have been injured.

In the Southern Railway, I find that the quality of work has deteriorated. The persons who are working there are not dedicated to their task of developing the railways in that region. This is a major remark I would like to make for the attention of the Railway Minister. It is either because of the neglect...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Please try to be brief.

SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN (Tamil Nadu): Give time to others also.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: It is either because of the neglect of the railway employees by the Railway Administration, or, there is no proper superintendence and control. The Southern Railway was considered to be one of the most efficient railways in the country. But today, it is not so. I say this because we used to have regular interaction with them.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Please wind up, Mr. Narayanasamy.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: We go to them. We talk to them. I find now that irresponsible people and people who have no dedication to duty are in service there. Therefore, the quality is going down. I would like the Minister to clarify the three-four points which I have raised.

I would also like to emphasise that this is a very major accident in which more than 65 people have lost their lives. It is simply the fault of the Station Masters of the two stations and

the signal man. Therefore, I am not satisfied with an enquiry by the Commissioner of Railway Safety. A judicial enquiry should be ordered in order to pinpoint the lapses by the people at different levels.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Shri Muthu Mani.

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF: Madam, I have a submission. I have two important meetings. Actually, in between the meetings, I came here just to make this statement. I would, therefore, make a request to the House that the clarifications may be taken up tomorrow. When you said that only one or two persons were to speak, I thought I could remain here and reply to the points. But if there are more Members who want to seek clarifications, it could be taken up tomorrow so that I would be in a position to reply to the clarifications.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN (Tamil Nadu): Tomorrow, there is a Calling Attention, Madam.

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF: If they want, I can answer now the two-three points which have been raised.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Madam, I would like to point out. ... (Interruptions)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Mr. Ganesan, please sit down. Do not interrupt. Let everybody speak one by one. Then only I can hear. Yes, Mrs. Jayanthi Natarajan.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Madam, the problem is this. Tomorrow, there is a Calling-Attention Motion. Another thing is, we know the practice in the House. Clarifications would be relegated to the bottom of the List of Business. I think if Members could be brief, we could complete it quickly. Otherwise, if it is postponed

to tomorrow, it would go to the bottom of the agenda. This is a very serious matter. We are all very much anguished over this.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): I agree with you. I would like to make a request to the Members. If they try to be brief, everybody would get a chance to speak. Secondly, let me make a request again, Secondly, if I make the request again, let the Tamil Nadu people speak. .. (Interruptions).

SHRI O. . RAJAGOPAL (Madhya Pradesh): You have given preference to the Kerala people.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS KHAPARDE): I don't mind giving preference to you also, but the Minister has to go to some meeting.

SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL: About a hundred persons have died .. (Interruptions).

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: It is only a request, Madam... .. (Interruptions). ...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): I am not saying that... (Interruptions). Okay. Mr. Muthu Mani, try to be brief.

SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Tamil Nadu): Madam, I will take only two minutes by way of asking six questions.

At this sorrowful time, I, on behalf of my party, the AIADMK, convey our deep condolences to the bereaved families.

My first question is this. It is learnt that over 200 people have died in the accident, but the Minister says in his statement that only 50 people have died. Does the figure given by the Minister indicate only the number of dead bodies recovered so far? How many passengers are reported to be missing?

The second question is this. The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has sanctioned an

ex gratia payment of Rs. 10,000 and Rs. 5,000 to the families of the deceased and the injured respectively, but the Railway Ministry which is responsible, has announced an *ex gratia* payment of Rs. 5,000 and Rs. 2,000 only. So, I would like to know whether this amount would be increased to help the victims and the families.

The third question is how the Railways is certain that the accident was due to a human failure. Is he going to have an enquiry into the accident conducted by experts? If it is true there was a human failure, will stringent action be taken against those who are responsible for the same?

My fourth question is this. This accident was caused due to the reckless way in which Tamil Nadu is treated by the Railways. Officials source say that the use of this Danishpet-Lokur line as a twin single line for both up and down trains was the cause of the accident. While tracks are used as single lines in general, this particular track was used as twin single line for administrative convenience. This is because of a less number of parallel tracks in Tamil Nadu due to poor allocation of funds. So, through you, Madam, I want to know whether the Minister will clarify what he is going to do with the twin single line used for up and down trains.

My fifth question is this. What steps is the Railway Minister going to take technologically either to avoid or to reduce injury to passengers when there is a collision of this nature?

My last question is this. After every such accident, the Railway Minister has been only making promises to ensure safety of passengers. His presence in the House to regret it once more, establishes the fact that he has not been able to live up to his promises.

It is regretted that no one in the Government is prepared to own the responsibility for such a tragic accident, unlike Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri who res-

igned owing moral responsibility. So, through you, on behalf of Tamilians, I demand the resignation of the Railway Minister accordingly.

Thank you.

SHRI MISA R. GANESAN (Tamil Nadu): Madam, the Minister has conveniently suppressed several important facts relating to the accident in his statement.

Madam, in the regime of this Railway Minister, so many railway accidents are taking place, and, definitely, for the greatest number of railway accidents, his name will find place in the Guinness Book of World Records.

Madam, the Minister mentioned to the Press that the mishap occurred as the driver of the goods train had ignored the signal and proceeded on the track without getting clearance. There is an interlocking signal system. That is what the paper says. And even if someone had wanted to send the two trains on the same track, he would not have been able to do it. That is what the report by the Railway officials says. How the two trains came on the same track, we do not know? And it is a head-on collision. How could this head-on collision have happened on a double-line sections, one for the upward trains and one for the downward trains?

Since both the drivers were killed, a detailed inquiry is required to find out if they had imported the signal or some other factor had led to the accident. These are the questions I want to put to the hon. Minister.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: I would like to put the same questions that my colleagues have put here.

With great respect to the Railway Minister I would say that it is not a human failure alone. It is the entire systems failure. If it is a human failure, how can we account for the fact, where for administrative convenience a line, which

was only a single- , has been allowed to be used, whereby a head-on collision between the two trains has occurred? It is not the fault of the signal man, who was suspended. It is the system's failure. What is the meaning of administrative convenience? I would like the hon. Minister to kindly respond to us, because administrative convenience of the Railways has been at the cost of one hundred lives that have been lost. One more accident before this was there on the same ground. Therefore, the first question that I would ask of the hon. Minister is to define the administrative convenience. It is a much larger issue. It is not that one signal man went to sleep and the trains were allowed and he was suspended. It is not as simple as that.

I agree with my colleagues that Tamil Nadu is being given a step-motherly treatment. If proper attention had been paid to the actual establishment and running of trains in the State, such accidents would not occur. It is not a joke that we get up and speak over here about the low allocation of funds to the State. It is because proper attention is not paid that such accidents occur and we have to pay a very heavy price. It is not merely a question of development.

As Mr. Ganesan said just now — we are experts — reports reaching us say even if a person had wanted to send them on the same track, he could not have done this because of inter-locking of signals. It is impossible for those trains. We want the Minister to enlighten us. Of course, everything else will follow a comprehensive report, but we would like to know how this happened when it is impossible for a person to send two trains because of interlocking of signals, even if there was a human error, the signals would have prevented the trains from going on the track. In that case, do we have an absolutely bizarre episode of the trains coming on the track with such disastrous consequences.

Thirdly, it is not just a small or minor accident. It is not a minor failure and

therefore trains have some late. Loss of human lives is absolutely tragic. I would not even go into the details of how tragic it is, for those of us who represent the State and for so many of our brothers and sisters in the State, we do not know even how many lives have been lost. Are we taking the State seriously or not? We can get up here and say solemnly in this House of Parliament that 50 lives have been lost. We know that more lives have been lost. What kind of inquiry can we expect from an establishment which does not even know how many people have been killed? Therefore, I demand from the Railway Minister that there should be a proper judicial inquiry, which would cover not only the causes for this accident, but on a such larger scale, it would cover what this administrative convenience is, how you allow the trains to use the single-line track in two ways for the sake of administrative convenience of the Railways. It should cover the entire gamut of it.

Finally, I am constrained to say this and I am sorry to say this, the amount of compensation that the Railway Minister has announced is so pathetic. I think it is better we do not take it. It is an insult to the people who have suffered. My friends on the other side have not mentioned the amount which the Railways have offered to the people who suffered simple injuries. The State Government has directed Rs. 10,000 to be paid for the deceased, Rs. 5,000, and so according to a scale. Now the Ministry of Railways has ordered Rs. 250 for injuries. That is not there in the Statement. It is in the newspaper report. Rs. 250 for injuries! What can they do with this amount? They cannot even reach the hospital with Rs. 250. Therefore, I call upon the Railway Minister to revise this amount. The thing he can do is to revise this amount. He says, "This is in addition to the amount payable as compensation under provisions of the Railways Act." We all know, how the bureaucratic the compensation Act is and how difficult it is to get it. The

[*Shrimati Jayanthi Natarajan*]

question is the people who have been injured require immediate relief. Therefore, the amount should be revised immediately. Let us not enact such a pathetic charade by giving Rs. 250. It is an insult to the people who have been put to great misery. Therefore, let the Railway Minister announce today that amount would be revised and he would consider it.

Lastly, why did they take six hours, from 10.30 P.M. to 2.00 A.M. for the first relief van to reach this place? It was the local people and was the uninjured people in other compartments who immediately rushed to the aid of the injured people and of the deceased people. Again this is a system failure of the Railways. Madam, when an accident occurred at 10.45 P.M. or 10.30 P.M., I would like to know why the Southern Railway took six hours, until 2.30 A.M., to send the first medical relief van to the site? I would like the Railway Minister to clarify this point also. Thank you.

SHRI S.K.T. RAMCHANDRAN: Madam Vice-Chairperson, I do not know what to speak. It is so grave, I am unable to express anything not because the accident occurred in my State but because it happens regularly in this country. Madam, shall we leave it as a providential one or shall we weep because it is unfortunate? What is this, Madam? Madam, except the word "unfortunate" what else are we getting from the Minister's statement? I do not know whether it was due to human error or due to any technical snag or due to any mechanical snag. Whatever may be the case, it was a grave thing which human lives is absolutely tragic it is, for we cannot bear.

Madam, I do not know how they have arrived at the figure of 50, persons who have died. What mechanism do they have to calculate this figure? It was not an ordinary local train. But it was an express train which was having a regular chart of reservation of passengers because most of the passengers travelled on reservation. If they take the reservation

list, subtracting the people who are alive from the list, they can easily arrive at the figure of the casualty. Just now my friend told me that the number of persons died in the accident might cross the 200 figure because four or five bogies have been totally destroyed. If one could see the picture of the accident and the manner in which bogies have been destroyed, the figure of the number of persons who died could be more. When there is a simple mechanism, why don't they arrive of the correct figure?

Madam, when such a grave accident took place, why didn't the Railways seek the assistance of the local authorities like the Collector or some other officials? They were very near to the site of the accident. They could have rendered timely assistance. Why did they hesitate? What was the reason?

Madam, I am unable to understand the technical terms, double single line, a twin line and double line. What is this? I can't understand this term "twin single line system". We know that a single line is a single line. A double line consists of two lines. (*Time-ball*)... This is a technical point, please give some more time. What is this "twin single line"? (*Interruptions*). I do not know whether it is a jugglery of words. (*Interruptions*). This was not the way to play with the lives of our people whether it was a twin line or a double line. It is immaterial. When there are two lines, why did this accident take place? He could very easily say "Oh! one train came from this way and another train came from that way and they collided." How does it matter? Madam, this accident was not only a grave thing but also something more serious was there. I suspect some sabotage might have been there. So, there should be detailed inquiry. (*Interruptions*). Probably the LTTE people might have been involved or the so-called people who are more fanatical than the LTTE people. So, there should be a detailed and thorough inquiry.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Please wind up, Mr. Ramachandran.

SHRI S.K.T. RAMACHANDRAN: Only only point, Madam. Again and again, I do not want to express the same thing. But, they do not come to you with begging bowls. The dead are dead. They are not going to come back to you and ask for this, whatever you give now. When you give something, be magnanimous. Please don't be a miser.

With these words, I conclude, Madam.

श्री नरेश यादव (बिहार) : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदया, यह एक दुर्घटना रेल दुर्घटना हुई है रेल प्रशासन की भूल के चलते और रेल प्रशासन के प्रधान होने के नाते इसकी जिम्मेदारी रेल मंत्री जी को अपने ऊपर लेनी चाहिए और लान बहादुर शास्त्री माधव राव सिधिया के रास्ते पर चल कर उन्हें तुरन्त इस बड़ी दुर्घटना के लिए इस्तीफा देना चाहिए । यह सबसे पहली बात है । दूसरी बात मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि यह जो बताया गया है कि इसमें 50 यात्री हताहत हुए, टी.वी. पर 60 कहा गया और अखबारों में 65 कहा गया, जो हताहत हुए, मर गए वे यात्री हिन्दुस्तान के थे और उन लोगों को, उनके परिवारों को रेल प्रशासन की तरफ से रेल विभाग में नौकरियाँ दी जाएँ, यह सबसे बड़ी माँग मैं करता हूँ जो मृतक है नौकरी के अलावा उसे दो-दो लाख रुपये रेल विभाग से मुआवजा दिया जाना चाहिए, इसलिए कि कम से कम उस परिवार का जो हताहत हो गया, जो मर गया, अब तो वापस नहीं होने वाला है । उनके आश्रितों को रेल विभाग में नौकरी दे करके बड़े कल्याण का कार्य सरकार के माध्यम से होना चाहिए

इन शब्दों के साथ, बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद ।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Mr. John Fernandes. Before you start, Mr. Fernandes, I want to say this.

देखिए, मंत्री जी को कहीं बहुत जरूरी मीटिंग के लिए जाना है . . . (व्यवधान)

श्री संघ प्रिय गौतम : मैडम, बाकी क्लैरीफिकेशंस कल रखिए । . . (व्यवधान)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): The hon. Minister wants to go for some urgent meeting.

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES (Goa): Madam, we will finish it today itself. We will take only one minute each. (Interruptions).

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF : I have a very important meeting. (Interruptions).

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: Madam, this is a serious matter. I won't take more than one minute. (Interruptions). It is a very serious matter. You should not dilute it by postponing it. (Interruptions). I will be very brief, Maadam. (Interruptions).

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): The Minister wants to go for an urgent meeting. (Interruptions). The Railway Minister wants to go for a very important meeting.

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: Tomorrow, it will dilute. (Interruptions).

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Madam, let us take it up tomorrow immediately after the Question Hour. (Interruptions). But, please declare it from the Chair and then you can have it tomorrow.

SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA (Karnataka): Let us take it up tomorrow. . . (Interruptions). . .

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA (West Bengal): It cannot be taken up tomorrow immediately after the Question Hour. (Interruptions). According to the rules . . . (Interruptions). . .

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Then let the Minister do it today itself. (*Interruptions*).

SYED SIBTEY RAI (Uttar Pradesh): Madam, the hon. Minister has requested the Chair as well as hon. Members of the House. We should try to appreciate his position. (*Interruptions*). I think there is no problem if it is taken up in the afternoon... (*Interruptions*).

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: No. (*Interruptions*).

SYED SIBTEY RAZI: The accident has already occurred. (*Interruptions*).

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: No. We want it today itself. (*Interruptions*).

SYED SIBTEY RAZI: It is not an issue of Tamil Nadu alone. (*Interruptions*).

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): I am not able to hear anything... (*Interruptions*).

SYED SIBTEY RAZI: I think, by tomorrow, the Minister will be able to know more about it.

SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN (Tamilnadu): We want it today itself. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI TINDIVANAM G. VENKATRAMAN (Tamil Nadu): The Minister should reply today itself. (*Interruptions*).

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Will you all please sit down? (*Interruptions*). Mr. Sibtey Razi, will you please sit down? (*Interruptions*). Hon. Members, will you please sit down? (*Interruptions*).

SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN: Madam, this is regarding an accident. (*Interruptions*).

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Will you please sit down?... (*Interruptions*)... I want to say something... (*Interruptions*)... I want to say something... will you please sit down (*Interruptions*) Will you please sit down? (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF: After the Cabinet meeting I am prepared to come back and sit throughout the night. (*Interruptions*)....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Mr. Virumbi, will you allow me speak? (*Interruptions*)... I am not allowing you. Will you please sit down? (*Interruptions*)... Mr. Minister.

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF: I have a submission to make. After the Cabinet meeting I am prepared to come back and I am prepared to sit throughout the night. Let us sit. I am prepared. Don't postpone it for tomorrow. I am prepared to sit. (*Interruptions*)....

SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: Yes, we are also prepared to sit. (*Interruptions*)... We are also prepared to sit... (*Interruptions*)... .

श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज (हरियाणा) : मैडम, मेरा एक पॉइंट ऑफ आर्डर है, उस पर आप अपना डिस्मिशन दीजिए।

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: Madam... (*Interruptions*)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Mr. Virumbi, I have told you to sit down. Mrs. Sushma Swaraj wants to say something. (*Interruptions*)...

श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज : उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, मैं बहुत अदब के साथ आपकी सेवा में गुजारिश करना चाहती हूँ... (व्यवधान)

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Madam,...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Will you please sit down? Mrs. Sushma Swaraj wants to say something. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTJANAN: Due to this accident many marriages have been postponed. Why can't this meeting be postponed? *(Interruptions)*.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Madam, you have identified me *(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): What is this? Mrs. Sushma Swaraj wants to say something

श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज : मैडम, मैं बहुत अदब के साथ आपकी सेवा में गुजारिश करना चाहती हूँ कि क्या यह सदन केवल मंत्रियों की सुविधा से चलेगा ? आपने यह सुबह का आर्डर पेपर देखा होगा । इसमें लिखा था कि "स्टेटमेंट बाय होम मिनिस्टर एट 5 पी० एम०" जिसमें उन्हें आसाम, मेघालय और त्रिपुरा में आर०ए०पी० खत्म करने के बारे में वक्तव्य देना था और मुझे उसके ऊपर क्लैरीफिकेशंस सीक करने थी । मैंने अपना नाम दिया, इतने में सप्लीमेंटरी एजेंडा पेपर आ गया जिसमें लिख दिया गया कि "स्टेटमेंट बाय मिनिस्टर आफ रेलवे एट 5 पी० एम०" और कहा गया कि होम मिनिस्टर का स्टेटमेंट 6 बजे होगा या जब भी रेलवे स्टेटमेंट के क्लैरीफिकेशंस खत्म हो जाएंगे, दोनों में से जो पहले होगा, उस समय ले लिया जाएगा । अब सप्लीमेंटरी एजेंडा के हिसाब से हम लोग यहां आकर बैठे कि 6 बजे नहीं तो जब भी रेलवे के क्लैरीफिकेशंस खत्म हो जाएंगे तब हमारे क्लैरीफिकेशंस लिए जाएंगे । यहां आकर पता चला कि चव्वाण साहब चले गए हैं और इसलिए वह क्लैरीफिकेशंस नहीं होंगे । अब रेलवे के क्लैरीफिकेशंस शुरू हो गए और साढ़े 5 बजे अब मंत्रीजी कहते हैं कि उनको जाना है, इसलिए ये क्लैरीफिकेशंस खत्म कर दिए जाएं ।

मैं चैंबर से जानना चाहती हूँ कि सदस्यों की सुविधा-असुविधा का ध्यान भी यह सरकार रखेगी कि नहीं रखेगी ? दिन में दो-दो बार एजेंडा पेपर बदलता है । दो-दो बार कहा जाता है कि यह 5 बजे लिया जाएगा । कभी कहा जाता है कि 6 बजे लिया जाएगा । फिर हम आते हैं तो आप कहते हैं कि 4 बजे "ले" कर के होम मिनिस्टर चले गए हैं । तो आखिर सरकार और पार्लियामेंटरी अफेयर्स मिनिस्टर यह क्या कर रहे हैं ? इसलिए मैं आपकी रुलिंग चाहती हूँ । हम यहां 5 बजे के हिसाब से आए, फिर 6 बजे के हिसाब से आए, लेकिन पता चला कि 4 बजे होम मिनिस्टर साहब चले गए । अब रेल मंत्री जी को जाना है । तो क्या मंत्रियों की सुविधा का ध्यान रखा जाएगा या सदस्यों की सुविधा भी कुछ मायने रखती है ? ... *(व्यवधान)*...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Madam, we could have let the Minister reply instead of this. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: Madam,...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Mr. John Fernandes, will you please sit down?

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: Madam, you have called my name

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): I have called your name. But at the same time there is an urgency of attending the meeting also. The Minister has to go. I would tell the hon. Members that the Minister would like to give his reply tomorrow at 2.30 P.M. *(Interruptions)* ...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No, Madam. *(Interruptions)* ...

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY, Madam. I am on a point of order. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: Madam, this issue was raised yesterday also. *(Interruptions)* ...

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY, Madam, I am on a point of order. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: Mr. Veerappan had raised this issue yesterday. (*Interruptions*) ... Madam, Mr. K. K. Veerappan had raised this issue yesterday. Mr. Veerappan wrote to the Chairman for permission to raise this issue during Zero Hour. The Chairman in this discretion said, "Tomorrow during Zero Hour you take it up." Today morning they said, "Today there is no Zero Hour. We will take it up at 5 o'clock." ... (*Interruptions*). ...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Mr. Virumbi, you please don't get excited. Please sit down. (*Interruptions*) .e. I have allowed Mr. Fernandes to speak. (*Interruptions*) ... You please sit down. Mr. Fernandes. (*Interruptions*) ..

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: No other work is more important than human life. That is our feeling. (*Interruptions*) ... No other work is more important than human life. (*Interruptions*) ...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Mr. John Fernandes. (*Interruptions*) ...

SYED SIBTEY RAZI: Madam, I don't think it is an issue concerning Tamil Nadu only. ... (*Interruptions*) ..

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: Madam, I don't want this to be treated as a Tamil Nadu problem. (*Interruptions*) .. It is a national tragedy. (*Interruptions*) ... It is a national tragedy. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: What is this? (*Interruptions*)

SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Tamil Nadu is a part of India. (*Interruptions*) ..

SHRI V. RAJAN CHELLAPPA (Tamil Nadu): What is this? (*Interruptions*)...

SYED SIBTEY RAZI: It is a national loss. (*Interruptions*) I am sorry. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: Madam, ... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN: Madam, ... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI V. RAJAN CHELLAPPA: Madam, ... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Madam, ... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Madam (*Interruptions*).

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Madam, ... (*Interruptions*). The attitude of this Member. ... (*Interruptions*).

SYED SIBTEY RAZI: This is not Tamil Nadu Assembly. (*Interruptions*). I am very sorry. (*Interruptions*).

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Will you please take your seats? (*Interruptions*).

SYED SIBTEY RAZI: This is not Tamil Nadu Assembly. (*Interruptions*). You cannot do like this. (*Interruptions*).

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Please sit down. (*Interruptions*).

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Madam, it is very unfortunate that Mr. Sibtey Razi made this statement. (*Interruptions*).

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Please sit down. (*Interruptions*).

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: He should withdraw his words. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: He is a senior Member of this House. (*Interruptions*).

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Please sit down (*Interruptions*).

(The Deputy Chairman in the Chair)

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Madam, more than a hundred people have died. He is saying that. (Interruptions).

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please. (Interruptions). Please sit down. (Interruptions). Let me find out. (Interruptions). Please (Interruptions). Let me find out. (Interruptions). Please sit down Please sit down. (Interruptions). Let me find out. (Interruptions). Please sit down. Please sit Please sit down. (Interruptions). Please sit down. Please sit down. Please sit down. Jayanthiji, please sit down. I will find out. (Interruptions). Just a minute. (Interruptions). Mr. Narayanasamy, please sit down. (Interruptions).

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Madam, more than a hundred people have died. (Interruptions).

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please keep quiet. (Interruptions). Mr. Narayanasamy, please. (Interruptions). Please sit down. What is this? (Interruptions). Please sit down. what is this? (Interruptions). I will take a decision. (Interruptions). Let me hear him. (Interruptions). Let me hear him please. (Interruptions). Please sit down. Just a minute. Jayanthiji, please sit down. (Interruptions). Just one minute. (Interruptions). Can you keep quiet for a second? (Interruptions).

SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTI-NAN: Had his relatives been there. (Interruptions).

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please. (Interruptions).

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: Nobody should ridicule. (Interruptions).

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. (Interruptions). Mr. Virumbi, please sit down. (Interruptions). Mr. Narayanasamy, please sit down. (Interruptions). Please sit down. You are a Member of this House. I saw it on Television. I was doing some work. I

got the message and I came here. I though, let me find out what the problem is. - Any problem can be solved whether it is from this side or that side. It can be solved without our getting agitated. (Interruptions). Please keep quiet. There are always two sides of a coin. There cannot be one side.

Let us cool down. While you are under tension, you cannot think right. There is some problem May be, a misunderstanding. Let us discuss it. It is a serious matter. The Minister is here. I think he has to go for Cabinet meeting. But he has remained here to reply. Let me find out. Now, has everybody cooled down? Should I get some water for each one of you?

SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTI-NAN: We have not cooled down. He should apologise for what he said about Tamil Nadu and the Tamil Nadu Members. (Interruptions)...

SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI: Madam, Mr. Sibtey Razi is a senior Member of this House. He should express his regret or withdraw his remarks. I am sure he will respond to it. (Interruptions)...

SHRI S. K. T. RAMCHANDRAN:*

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Nothing is going on record. I am not allowing you. I do not want anybody to express such sentiments about any State Legislature. You are in the Raiva Sabha, so talk about it. Don't talk about the others. (Interruptions)...

श्री जगदीश एसह माथर (उत्तर प्रदेश): मैं अपने मित्र से एक निवेदन कर रहा हूँ, सैयद सिक्ते रज़ी माहूब, आप अपने ग़ब्द वापिस ले लीजिए। (व्यवधान)

सैयद सिक्ते रज़ी: मैडम, उस वक़्त जो सवाल था, मैं समझता हूँ कि शायद मेरी बात को कुछ ग़लत समझा गया। मेरा कोई मतलब ऐसा नहीं था कि मैं किसी को हट्टे कहूँ... (व्यवधान)...

السیڈ سبٹے رازی: میرا اس وقت جو
سوال تھا۔ میں سمجھتا ہوں کہ شاید
میری بات کو کچھ غلط سمجھا گیا۔ میرا
کوئی ایسا مطلب نہیں تھا کہ میں کسی کو
صرٹ کروں۔۔۔ "مداخلت"۔۔۔

He had some other urgent work to attend to.

It was between the Chair and him (Interruptions)...

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: He should not be allowed to explain. (Interruptions)... He should apologise... (Interruptions)...

SHRI PASUMPON THA KIRUTTI-NAN: Let him apologise... (Interruptions)...

SHRI TINDIVANAM G. VENKAT-RAMAN: Let him apologise. We do not want his explanation. (Interruptions)...

SYED SIBTEY RAZI: Let me explain my position... (Interruptions)... I need your protection... (Interruptions)...

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: Is this Indian unity?... (Interruptions)

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Virumbi, I as your Presiding Officer and Deputy Chairman of this House, have a right to know why a Member has to apologise. I have a right to know what has hurt the feelings of the Members. If I feel that your feelings have been hurt, I shall apologise on everybody's behalf. I assure you. But let me, at least, know what happened. If you get so angry, how can I understand what actually happened? I will listen to you. I will also listen to him. But please behave like grown-ups. Please let me listen to him.

*Not recorded

†[] Transliteration in Arabic script.

SYED SIBTEY RAZI: So, I said that it should be postponed to tomorrow. It is possible that the Minister would be able to get further information on this. I said that it was a national issue and we were all sorry. I think, in the din, my version was taken otherwise. I never said that it was a regional issue. It is a national issue. It is a national loss and we are equally concerned. But if my utterances have been taken otherwise, I am sorry. If you are hurt, I am sorry. We are all for national unity. We all have a lot of regard for Tamil Nadu. It is a part of India like UP or any other Northern region. We are equally concerned. We share your concern. It is our concern also. In spite of all that, if my words have hurt anybody or have caused injury to you, if I have not been able to express myself, I am sorry for that.

श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज : मैडम, मेरा एक पोटेंट ग्रॉफ आर्डर था, चेयर से किया था। लेकिन रूलिंग देने से पहले आप आ गई। अभी तक रूलिंग नहीं आई। (व्यवधान) आज के लिस्टेड बिजनेस में यह लिखा हुआ है कि होम मिनिस्टर शाम 5 बजे एक वक्तव्य देंगे—असम, मेघालय तथा त्रिपुरा राज्यों के बारे में। उस पर मुझे क्लेरिफिकेशन पूछनी थी। (व्यवधान)

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I understand that because Mr. Mañang Sinh has already told me. He came to my Chamber and told me about it... (Interruptions)... Just one minute. Let me explain to her so that we can resume other work. When we finished the Prime Minister's reply, I asked the Members to speak on the General Budget. There was hardly anybody who was prepared to speak. Then, I asked Mr. Kohli to speak. At that time, the Home Minister was here. But he had also to attend a Cabinet meeting and it was decided in the Chairman's Chamber that we would today have the Railway Minister's statement and we would complete it between 5.00 p.m. and 6.00 p.m. at 6.00 p.m. the Home Minister would lay both of his statements, on the table

of the House. It was decided in the morning with the consent of the Members present there. The Chairman had agreed to this. It was decided that in case there was time we would seek clarifications. Otherwise, we could have it tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. That was agreed to. If you have any clarifications, the Home Minister is not here now.

SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: Madam, what is this? So many lives have been lost... (*Interruptions*)...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please keep quiet. Otherwise, I will ask you to go out of the House.

SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: so many lives have been lost... (*Interruptions*).

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please keep quiet. Just keep quiet.

SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: What is this, Madam?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You are making so much noise. That is not going to bring those killed back to life. So, be cool.

So, Mrs. Sushma, it cannot be taken up today. Let us first finish the statement of the Railway Minister.

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: Madam, my name was called.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: How many names are there?

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: My name is the first one, outside Tamil Nadu. I was called by the Vice-Chairman.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Where is your name?

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: My name figures at the seventh position.

SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI: It is a national tragedy. Let us not have the regional feelings.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, Mr. Fernandes.

SHR JOHN F. FERNANDES: (Goa): Madam, I think it is not a regional problem. It is a national tragedy. I am sure the whole country is one in sympathising with the families of those dead and those injured in the accident. My queries are very simple because don't want to duplicate what has already been said. It is said that the signal system is an interlocking system. That means, two trains cannot be permitted on the same track at the same time. But the Minister, whether rightly or wrongly, avoided to mention that. He has not mentioned whether the man responsible for the signal system has been suspended. He has not been arrested. The so-called human failure is not human failure. I think it is a system failure. If it is an interlocking system, then how can that system permit more than one train on the track? When the Railway Minister presented his Budget, we were happy because the Minister had mentioned about the introduction of telephone system in the railways. If a signal man is sleepy or if the system does not work properly, then there should be an alternative way of communicating with the engine driver to warn him that such and such train has gone in a wrong way. I would like to know whether the hon. Minister would see that the telecommunication system is connected with the engines of the trains throughout the country because so far we have the radio telephone system and the mobile telephone system. I would like to know whether he has made any attempt to see that there is an alternative mechanism to warn the engine driver in case there is a signal failure.

The second thing which the hon. Minister has rightly avoided to mention is about the amount he has given as the ex-gratia payment. As rightly mentioned

by Shrimati Jayanthi Natarajan, the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu was more magnanimous in making the ex-gratia payment. She has offered Rs. 10,000/-, Rs. 5,000/- and Rs. 2,000/- depending upon the case whereas the Railway Minister has offered Rs. 5,000/-, Rs. 2,500/- and Rs. 250/- respectively.

I feel that it is not proper for the Minister to act in this way, particularly when it is his own department, the Indian Railways, which got into this accident.

Madam, we know that whenever there are such tragedies, we use the Defence personnel. Now, here the medical van reached only after four hours. If they had requisitioned the helicopters and the Army personnel, more lives could have been saved. We use the Defence personnel whenever there is a natural calamity like floods, earthquakes, etc. Why does the Ministry of Railways not make it a point to see to it that whenever there are such tragedies, the help of the Army is sought because they have the helicopters which can reach the place much earlier than the Railway van can? Thirdly, I want to point out that the Minister has said that he has asked the Commissioner of Railway Safety to go into it and hold a statutory inquiry. I had raised this point earlier also. The department is involved in the accident and its employee is asked to inquire into it. I do not know what type of justice we can have. I feel that it will be proper if we have a judicial inquiry or some separate authority is created to go into such accidents. And, such reports should be laid on the Table of the House. We only see the statement and nothing is reported to the Parliament.

I hope the hon. Minister will react to it.

उप-भाषति : श्री राज्य प्रकाश भालवीय । कुछ और भी रह गया इतने लोगों के पृष्ठ के बाद ?

श्री राज्य प्रकाश भालवीय (उत्तर प्रदेश) :
एक ही सवाल पूछ लेता हूँ ।

उप-भाषति : कुछ नई बात हो तो पूछ लीजिए । रिपीट करने से क्या फायदा ?

श्री लक्ष्मण प्रकाश भालवीय : ये जो 50 लोगों की मृत्यु हुई है, मंत्री जी के हिसाब से इनकवायरी वगैरह होगी लेकिन मैं एक ही प्रश्न पूछना चाहता हूँ कि जो 50 लोगों की मृत्यु हुई है, इसमें कितने लोग ऐसे होंगे जो अपने घर के ब्रेड अर्नर होंगे, वेज अर्नर होंगे । जो कुछ भी कंफेंशन होगा वह बाद में मिलेगा । जो दिया जा रहा है वह बहुत कम है तो क्या मंत्री जी इस पर विचार करेंगे कि जो 50 लोगों की मृत्यु हुई है, उनके घर के कम से कम जो आश्रित हैं, उनकी योग्यता के अनुसार रेल विभाग में उनकी नौकरी देने की कृपा करेंगे यह मेरा सुझाव है कि अगर किसी परिवार का आदमी चला गया तो उनके पीछे जो चार-छह आश्रित हैं, यह बड़ा दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण है, सारा जीवन उनको बेसहारा रहना पड़ेगा ।

उप-भाषति : श्री संवर्धन गौतम । कुछ रहा है अभी ?

श्री संघ प्रिय गौतम : आधे मिनट में तीन बातें पूछनी हैं । नंबर एक, मंत्री जी के रेल मंत्री के कार्यकाल में इतनी दुर्घटनाएँ हुई हैं कि उनकी अनुभव यह हो गया होगा कि कारण क्या हैं दुर्घटनाओं के तो आप चुँकि मौके पर गए, आपकी निगाह में दुर्घटना का कारण क्या है, नंबर एक । नंबर दो, रेलवे कर्मचारी भी इस में मरे हैं, औरों को सबको आपने आर्थिक सहायता देने का वायदा किया लेकिन कर्मचारियों के आश्रितों को नौकरी देने की कोई बात नहीं कही, क्या ये देंगे ? और तीसरी बात, अभी एक-छेड़ साल पहले तक आपके साथ एक राज्य मंत्री थे और रेलवे मंत्रालय में तीन-तीन मंत्री रहे हैं । आप अकेले मंत्री चले आ रहे हैं तो दक्षता रेलवे की कम होगी । तो क्या

प्रधान मंत्री ने आपको मंत्री नहीं दिया या आपने मंत्री स्वीकार नहीं किया या अपने मंत्री भगा हाँ नहीं ? आखिर क्या कारण है ? यह भी एक कारण है कि जा एकाग्रता है, उस पर फकी पड़ा है, ता य तान सवाल पूछने हैं मुझे ।

उपसभापति : नहीं, मंत्री जी यह कह रहे थे कि क्या पांच से छह तक अहंरखा था टाइम, एक घंटे के लिए दिया था क्योंकि this matter was very serious and in the morning the Members had come and requested the Chairman to allow a Zero Hour submission on it. The Minister had already requested for his statement. So, we thought that we will give one hour for this. There are 18 names. Nine more names are there on my paper. But there is a Cabinet meeting. That is the thing. I think, if the Members are still very anxious, I can keep these names pending and the Minister's reply and we can have it tomorrow.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: At 12 o'clock, Madam.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: At 12 o'clock, we have the calling attention notice... (Interruptions)...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: As a special case, please have it at 12 o'clock. There will be no problem. Please do not have it at 2.30 or 5 and have the experience as to open.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: At 12 o'clock, there is a calling attention notice on NPT.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Then, let us finish it today, Madam, because we know what will happen. We know what will happen if it is later than that. We know that it will just disappear.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We won't have... (Interruptions)...

SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA: Madam, we can take it up at 12 o'clock. (Interruptions).

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Madam, let other Members complete and let the Minister reply at 12 o'clock. No problem. More than that it may just go on. We are anxious to know the reply.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: What we can do tomorrow is that we won't have the lunch hour. We can have the Minister's reply at that time. There would be no Zero Hour and Special Mentions. There are still nine names and he has to go for the meeting also. I saw the Finance Minister also leaving. He sat down because... (Interruptions)...

SYED SIBTEY RAZI: It should be taken up after the Calling Attention... (Interruptions).

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: After the Calling Attention!

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Madam, take it up after the Calling Attention... (Interruptions)...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Madam, the Calling Attention is about the nuclear non-proliferation. We are talking about the lives of a hundred people who have gone. In view of the seriousness of the accident, please keep it at 12 o'clock after the Question Hour... (Interruptions)...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: If the House so agrees, I have no objection... (Interruptions).

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: If they don't agree, then let us finish it today itself... (Interruptions)

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: As a special case, if the House so agrees... (Interruptions).

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA (West Bengal): Madam...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let us not enter into another discussion. Please sit down. No more discussion, please.

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: Madam, I am just responding.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You don't respond. The House should respond... *(Interruptions)*...

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: I want to respond on behalf of my party.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No party business. I am asking it from the House. No, please. Then every party will have its own opinion. I have seen it. If the House so agrees... *(Interruptions)*... He has to go. We cannot finish it today. So, tomorrow after the Question Hour, straightway we will have the reply of the Minister and after that we will take up the Calling Attention. We won't have the lunch hour tomorrow and we will discuss it... *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Madam, take it up after the Calling Attention during the lunch hour. *(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Whatever the House agrees, I will do that. No problem... *(Interruptions)*...

AN HON. MEMBER: Let him reply about the judicial inquiry... *(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He cannot reply today... *(Interruptions)*... Let us hear what the Minister says.

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF: Madam, what I would like to submit is that I can understand and appreciate the sentiments, emotions and concerns of the hon. Members. I can briefly tell what exactly is the position. If they want further clarifications they can have it tomorrow... *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Madam, let him reply now... *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF: Madam, first of all, I must tell that, as I said in my statement, it is most unfortunate and nobody is happy and everybody is sad. The whole nation shares this anguish. Madam, so far as the claims are concerned, about which everybody is worried, I want the hon. Members to understand two things. One is what we pay just at the time of accident. It is an ex-gratia payment that is given there itself for any immediate need because there may be money, there may not be money and how can the passengers travel? The compensation is paid under an Act of Parliament, you yourselves are giving, it is not the Minister also. So, two lakhs is being paid through the Claims Commissioner. So, to say that the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister is giving 10,000/- and we are not paying anything is not correct. If the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister is giving 10,000/- it is good. It is her gesture. It is a sort of additional support. We welcome that, but what we are paying... *(Interruptions)*... Please don't interrupt. What we are paying is two lakhs through the Claims Commissioner because any family who has lost its member has to establish its right as the legal heir to get that money. It is a quasi-judicial body where judges are there. Through that the claimants get money of Rs. 2 lakhs.

About the figure of people who have lost their lives, it is not the Railway Ministry's affairs alone. The State Government is involved, the local Police is involved, the District Magistrate is involved, the people around involved and everybody is involved. How can you hide the figure? Why should we hide the figure? If more people have died, we would certainly say that so many people have died. Fifty is not a small number. That itself is a number which should cause concern to everyone of us. It is not a question of bargaining 10—15 here or there. That is not the way. Fifty people, including five crew members, have died. Madam, I have categorically stated in my statement in this House that it is a human error. What happens?

Sometimes the media writes something, sometimes the officials give some version. And everybody tries to pick up from that. There are two gradients, one should understand. It is a difficult area, a rocky area. It is a difficult terrain. It is a *ghat* section where there are two lines. There is 'A' line and another line. Generally the passenger traffic is sent by the safer line. The empty goods trains are sent by the other line. Unfortunately, the drivers of both the train have lost their lives. The assistant drivers, even the guards, have lost their lives. The signalling man, who generally gives the signals when a train passes and changes the alignment so that the train goes on to the proper line, could not act in time, according to whatever information has come. It is a technical matter.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Is it not automatic?

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF: We will be able to know only when the Safety Commissioner who has the technical expertise, throws more light on this. *(Interruptions)*.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please, no. Let him speak. If you keep on interrupting him, *..(Interruptions)...*

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF: What I would like to say is, let us not go on assuming things based on what is written in the Press. I must let the technical persons go and look into that. Let me find out why it has happened, how it has happened. When the report comes, if you are still not convinced, then if you want, we can have a judicial inquiry. In fact, I must tell the House, through you, when any accident takes place, one should suppose one is among those unfortunate people who have suffered in the accident. This is the type of concern one should have. It is not enough just to be sympathetic and speak about it. Unless we develop that

kind of concern, we will not be able to take it seriously. This is how I look at things. These are the important things.

As regards all other things like toning up the administration, etc. —some people said that Tamil Nadu is neglected, the administration has become bad if there are bad elements in the Southern Railway, we will change them. There is no question of protecting anybody we will not tolerate any inefficient administration which will please with the lives of people. If somebody is not doing well, we will take care of him. With these words, I ... *(Interruptions)...*

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Madam, how about a judicial inquiry? *(Interruptions)*.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please. *..(Interruptions)...* All of you need not have to get up. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF: Let the inquiry report from the Safety Commissioner come. If you are not satisfied, ... *(Interruptions)...*

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No, no. *(Interruptions)* We are not satisfied. We are walking out. *(Interruptions)*.

(At this stage some Hon. Members left the House).

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Madam, I want your indulgence.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: May I request the hon. Minister to kindly consider, in view of the fact that the signalling system had failed — I am not ready to believe this version that it is because of a particular person because signalling is automatic, it is difficult to believe how there could be a collision between two trains on the same route in a difficult terrain, it is extremely unfortunate let the Minister once again consider the demand for having a judicial inquiry.

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: So, there is no scope for doubt .. (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Let him kindly consider this fact so that the scope for doubt is removed... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: It is the usual practice with the Railways to ask the Railway Safety Commissioner to inquire into the causes of the accidents. I agree. But we had a bitter experience in this regard. Shri M. A. Babys wife was involved in an accident in Peruman. The report of the Safety Commissioner was that it was because of a tornado, it was thrown off by the wind into the water. This kind of reports come from the Commissioner. That is why the Members are agitating for a judicial inquiry. After that report the Kerala people have no faith in the Commissioner. I appeal to the Minister that keeping in view the sentiments of the people....(*Interruptions*)...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let him speak. Let him explain to the Minister in his own way what he wants. If we prompt, the Minister does not understand and he would not know what Mr. Ravi is trying to say.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: That Commission took one year.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mantriji, what everybody is feeling is...

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF: Madam, I would put it the other way. What I would suggest is I have seen a number of such occasions, the way Members express concern comes about this kind of developments — let it a Parliamentary Committee should go and inquire into this. Let them have a through knowledge of it. I would

like the Members to get educated with all the technicalities. If the Parliamentary Committee still finds that there is something fishy and it needs a judicial probe, I would not hesitate.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Madam, I seek a clarification...(*Interruptions*)...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no. . (*Interruptions*). ... Shri T. N. Chaturvedi.

SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI. Madam, let me only add that the feelings of the Members have really been very much excited and for obvious sad reasons. I would only like to request the Minister, I had made a suggestion in my speech at the time of the Railway Budget—that the inquiry by the Railway Safety Commissioner is part of an establishment inquiry. Normally there is some kind of a reservation. That is why in the interest of the public credibility we should set up a system of an independent inquiry commission or an autonomous commission which gets into action immediately after every accident. This should be partly technical and partly judicial.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Time bound also.

SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI: Yes, it should be time-bound also. Then there will not be this kind of a hue and cry to guards for a judicial inquiry because always people feel that there will be an attempt to cover up after a lapse of time when so many lives have been lost. I would request the hon. Minister to respond to this. If the Minister wants that a Parliamentary Committee can also go, let it go. But, he must consider this question of a permanent autonomous commission to go into the reasons of the accidents...(*Interruptions*).

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: That is a different thing.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no; I feel there is a lot of sense in what Mr. Chaturvedi is saying. Mantri, because it is an internal inquiry constituted by the Ministry's own people, who are in charge of safety, perhaps the faith of the people is not so much there. That is why Members are asking for a judicial inquiry. That the hon. Members say is that it should be a judicial body plus technical people so that they can find out the reasons for the accidents. You may have a permanent commission, you may have a temporary commission from time to time — I hope there won't be many accidents that we should have a permanent commission — but at least, in this case when we have such a situation when so many lives have been lost, I think the suggestion has a lot of value. You may think of this. I think the situation has got a lot of value. You may think over it.

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF: Perhaps the Members might be aware that these Safety Commissioners are not working under the Railway Minister. They are under the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Now, I think what Mr. Chaturvedi has said is a very relevant point and a good point. I would not refute it. What I am saying is let a Parliamentary Committee go into this. Let it be a part of the recommendations. I do not mind. I have an open mind. (*Interruptions*).

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let him finish.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Does it mean that the Parliamentary Committee is the same thing here or you want a Parliamentary delegation? What do you want? I am suggesting,

if it is a Parliamentary Committee in the way Parliament constitutes a Committee as in the Securities Scam and others, if it is like that then it can be. Or, if you want to send a Parliamentary team, that is different. That we do not agree. But if it is a Parliamentary Committee for a Parliamentary probe, then we can definitely consider it.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I want to clarify that.

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: The hon. Minister said that Railway Safety is not under the Ministry of Civil Aviation. It is very wrong. I happen to be a Member of the Standing Committee. The Commissioner of Railway safety is utilized by the Civil Aviation Ministry. The very word 'Commissioner of Railway Safety' cannot be under the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Madam. Secondly, Madam, when the officer comes before the Standing Committee, most of the information is not given to the Parliament. They use the shield of the Official Secrets Act, Madam. So, I think the Parliamentary Committee will serve no purpose in getting at the truth. That is my submission.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We have a lot of people.

SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: Eye-witnesses say that the crews of both the trains are not alive. So, this sort of an enquiry by the Commissioner of Railway Safety will not give better results. So, I would like to request the hon. Minister to immediately constitute a judicial enquiry and we have no objection to send some Parliamentary team or Committee, but we cannot probe into judicial things. We need a judicial enquiry now. So, it is very important to consider the gravity, to consider the

seriousness, of the situation. What is there if you refuse the request of the whole House?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I know. You have your say, but there are other Members in the House.

SHRIMATI MAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Let the Minister adopt Mr. Chaturvedi's statement because the Commissioner of Railway Safety is employed by the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: I happen to have a little technical background. The Railway Minister may not know the whole details. He has to be given certain information. It is a very serious matter. The reasons which have been attributed shows that our Railways are still in primitive days which I do not want to believe. And the Railways are working in such a way that two trains can collide because of human failure. When we talk about technology, Railways are talking about technological advancement for getting technologically improved engines and other things. It has to be something other than what has been told. It can only be by a judicial review, judicial enquiry, with the technical assistance, that the real reasons can be known.

Departmental enquiry or enquiry by the Commissioner of Railway Safety can never find out the reasons. Judicial enquiry is a must. Parliamentary Committee can also be swayed by the railway officials.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You may consider all the suggestions made and I think the insistence is on an independent judicial enquiry. The Enquiry Committee's Report can be reviewed by the Standing Committee on Railways by the Parliamentary Members. Parliament Members can visit the place, but they are not experts, so they cannot make an enquiry neither they would be able to afford so much time over there to go into all the details. Considering the seriousness, as you yourself expressed and have felt it seriously, I think you may take the suggestion more seriously. I think we can adjourn the House now for the day. (Interruptions) After my ruling, nothing is going to happen because the House is adjourned till 11 of the clock tomorrow.

The House then adjourned at twenty five minutes past six of the clock till eleven of the clock on Wednesday, the 17th May, 1995.