

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI:
Certain cases have been rejected.

3.00 p.m.

ठाकुर जगतपाल सिंह (मध्य प्रदेश) :
माननीय मंत्री ने अभी कहा कि कुछ लोगों ने
गलत पेंशन ले ली है जिनकी आपने रिजेंट
क्रिया है। क्या आप उनसे जो पैसा उन्होंने
ले लिया है, वह वाप लेंगे ?

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI:
In many cases we are doing that.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO
JADHAV: What about my question?

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE:
Have a Parliamentary team to help
you.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO
JADHAV: What about the question
of pension...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: This
is not a discussion. You can go and
see the Minister in his Chamber. He
cannot discuss each and every case
here. You should try to understand
it. Now, the Railway Minister.
(Interruptions)

श्री जगदम्बो प्रसाद यादव (बिहार) :
यह सवाल भी बार-बार उठाया गया है....

उपसभापति : मैंने रेल मिनिस्टर साहब
को स्टेटमेंट करने के लिए कहा है। आप बैठ
जाइये। (अवधान)

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

III. Accident to 122 UP Tamil Nadu
Express on 7-11-1987 on Amla-
Nagpur Section of Central Rail-
ways.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF
THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA):
Madam Deputy Chairman, I deeply
regret to apprise the House of an un-
fortunate train accident involving 122

Up New Delhi-Madras Tamil Nadu
Express at about 13.35 hrs. on 7-11-
1987 on the Amla-Nagpur Broad
Gauge single line section of Nagpur
Division of Central Railway. The
accident occurred between Katol and
Metpanjara stations about 50 kms.
short of Nagpur. The train had a
load of 21 coaches. The engine and
the first 8 coaches passed the site of
accident safely while the remaining
13 coaches, 9th on-wards from the
train engine, derailed/capsized. I re-
gret that, as a result of the accident,
2 passengers lost their lives including
one in the hospital. 13 persons suf-
fered simple injuries and 19 grievous

Senior Officers from Nagpur and
from the Zonal Railway Headquarters
at Bombay rushed to the site of acci-
dent. Member Engineering Railway
Board also rushed to the site. Later
Member Traffic left for Nagpur.

Immediately on receipt of the infor-
mation, medical vans were rushed
from Ajni and Amla. Railway doc-
tors also rushed to the site from Nag-
pur by road with ambulances. Local
doctors from Katol, Kalameshwar and
Pandhurna also rushed to the site and
rendered medical assistance. The in-
jured were moved to the Railway
and Civil Hospitals at Nagpur where
further treatment is following.

Ex-gratia payment to the next of
kin of dead and to the injured has
been arranged.

The stranded passengers were clear-
ed from the site by special buses and
by the unaffected coaches of the train.
They were further cleared by a spe-
cial train from Nagpur.

Joint checks of accident spot by Rail-
way and Civil Authorities as also by
the Commissioner of Railway Safety
Central Circle, have been conducted
whereafter restoration work has been
taken in hand in full swing.

In fact, the first train, one goods
train has already passed over the

affected section. Though communication was restored at 11.15 hrs. and the 15Down and 16UP GT Expresses were also run by the normal route.

Madam, joint checks have revealed that track keys for about 200 metres at the site of the accident were missing, indicating possibilities of track having been tampered with.

Commissioner of Railway Safety Central Circle working independently of the Ministry of Railways will hold a statutory inquiry into the accident from 9-11-1987 at Nagpur to determine the cause of the accident.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN (West Bengal): Madam, it is a matter of deep regret that our hon. Minister has to appear before the Parliament repeatedly to report on the fatal railway accident. It reveals the total lack of safety measures in our Railway system. And that is why, repeatedly, almost every month, we are having a major accident leading to loss of life and also injury to so many passengers. About the normal safety measures, I would like to know what is the system for inspecting the track and the railway bridges. And when was the last check made of that railway track there and the railway bridge because it is learnt from the newspapers that in the same morning the GT Express bound for Delhi passed through that track and it came safely? But when this train started passing through, it met with this accident. When was the last check made of the track and the bridge there?

Madam, one thing that surprises me is that joint checks of the accident spot by the Railway and Civil authorities as also by the Commissioner of Railway Safety have been conducted and they have come to the conclusion that track keys for about 200 metres at the site of the accident were missing. Madam, the Commissioner of Railway Safety is supposed to be an independent body. Then why has this independent body conducted an inquiry 1183RS-9.

along with a Government body, the Railway body? Now, it is said that the Commissioner of Railway Safety will again conduct an independent inquiry. A Joint investigation by the railway and civil authorities in conjunction with the Commissioner of Railway Safety has already been undertaken. Now, out of that joint inquiry they have come to the conclusion that track keys in some 200 metres at the accident site were missing etc. Now, will not this revelation influence the independent inquiry, when the Commissioner of Railway Safety conducts this inquiry independently? So, what was the utility of this?

Then, Madam, they say, may be a case of sabotage like tampering with the track. How do you come to that conclusion that it may be a case of tampering? You have come to the conclusion before the Commissioner of Railway Safety has conducted his independent inquiry. So, it is simply a question of passing on the buck to somebody else. I would like to know whether it is really due to lack of safety measures that this accident has taken place or is it due to tampering with or sabotage of the track. This question should be established by the Commissioner of Railway Safety independently, and not by the Government as they have done.

SHRI PUTTAPAGA RADHAKRISHNA (Andhra Pradesh): Madam, Tamil Nadu Express is a long train but the Minister has made a very brief statement. The accident took place on the 7th of this month. We have already read it in the newspapers. The Minister has not given any more information than the newspapers have given. He has not made any attempt to ascertain the facts and details of the accident and he has not correctly given the loss also, it seems. The newspapers have given more reports about the loss caused by the accident. Moreover, Madam, no finding regarding the cause of the accident is given. The statement should have contained some first-hand information

[Shri Puttapaga Radhakrishna]

regarding the reasons for the accident. But he has not given any reasons. He has simply ordered an inquiry which is a routine thing. That is one thing.

The other thing, Madam, is that for the last two and a half years or so, it seems that the rate of accidents had come down to some extent, we thought, that this young and energetic Minister, of course, Maharaja, has been making good efforts to control the accidents, but it seems that the things are normalised again. (*Interruptions*). Not Maharashtra, I said Maharaja. It seems that the Minister has become old and things have become normal again.

Madam, recently we have been seeing some accidents. Even after this particular accident, there was another derailling accident at Vijaywada a last night we came to know about the collision of a bus with a train. Like that the rate of accidents is going up. And the Minister has not revealed any intention to arrest the rate of accidents. That is why I would like to know from the Minister whether there is any intention on the part of the Government to arrest the rate of accidents at least, if you cannot totally stop them. Thank you very much.

श्री प्रमोद महाजन : (महाराष्ट्र) :

उपसभापति महोदया, गत दो-तीन वर्षों से रेल दुर्घटनाओं की संख्या निरन्तर बढ़ती जा रही है। जब भी रेल मंत्री जल्दा जल्दी इस सदन में आते हैं तो मन कांप उठता है। या तो वे भाड़ा बढ़ाने के लिए यहां आते हैं या किसी दुर्घटना की खबर देने के लिए यहां आते हैं। आज सदन में जिस प्रकार का निवेदन रेल मंत्री के द्वारा लिया गया है इसमें समाचार-पत्रों में छपी खबरों के सिवाय एक शब्द की भी अधिक जानकारी नहीं है। एक अर्थ से निरर्थक रूप में इस निवेदन की उपयोगिता है। मुझे याद है, इसके पहले भी एक बार इसी तमिलनाडु

एक्सप्रेस, जब वह दिल्ली आ रही थी दुर्घटनाग्रस्त हुई थी, जिसमें उसकी पैटरी कार पटरी से उखड़ गयी थी। उस में रहने वाले व्यक्ति की मृत्यु हो गई थी उसकी भी जांच की चर्चा हुई लेकिन निवेदन में जिस प्रकार की जांच की बात होती है उसके बाद इसका कभी भी पता नहीं चलता कि इस जांच का आखिर क्या हुआ। कहा यह जाता है कि जांच में जो रेलवे के पहियों का एक्सल है उस में कुछ दोष पाया गया लेकिन आज तक पता नहीं है कि उस तमिलनाडु एक्सप्रेस की एक साल पहले जो दुर्घटना हुई थी उसके बारे में रेल मंत्रालय ने क्या किया है। मुझे डर यह लगता है कि आज यह निवेदन करने के पश्चात् अगली दुर्घटना के दुख में हम इस दुर्घटना के कारणों का पता लगाना भूल जायेंगे और इसलिए सब से पहले मैं माननीय रेल मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहूंगा कि वहां जिस विभाग में यह रेल की दुर्घटना हुई है इन दिनों में नक्सलवादियों का काम बहुत बढ़ रहा है। कुछ अखबारों में इस प्रकार के समाचार छपे हैं कि इस दुर्घटना के पीछे उस विभाग में काम करने वाले नक्सलवादियों का हाथ है। अगर इस प्रकार के नक्सलवादियों के हाथ होने की सम्भावना की जांच करना हो तो वह केवल रेलवे सुरक्षा आयुक्त द्वारा सम्भव नहीं है क्योंकि वह तो ज्यादा से ज्यादा इस बात को कह सकता है कि यह दुर्घटना किसी बाहरी कारण से हुई है। मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहता हूं कि इस दुर्घटना की ठीक प्रकार से जांच करने के लिए और क्या इसके पीछे नक्सलवादियों का हाथ है इसका पता लगाने के लिए वह केन्द्रीय जांच ब्यूरो की इस में सहायता लेंगे ?

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV (Maharashtra): There is no doubt that that this is an unfortunate accident for the Tamil Nadu Express. At the same time I do not agree with my friend from the Opposition when he said that the number of accidents is on the increase.

The hon. Minister of Railways has introduced so many new trains. When I was coming from Hyderabad, I came to know that Andhra Pradesh Express has been made a daily service. Like that, so many trains have been converted into daily trains. Traffic has also increased. May I know from the hon. Minister whether it is due to increase of traffic, both passenger and goods, that these accidents take place? Then, maintenance of track is also not proper. May I know from the hon. Minister that the other reason for these accidents is lack of maintenance of track?

One Member of Lok Sabha, Mr. Banwari Lal Purohit was also travelling; another Member of Lok Sabha, Mr. Vairale, was also travelling by the same train and they held the passengers. I feel on such occasions proper timely medical aid and care is very necessary.

My friend from that side raised a very important point about Naxalite movement in that area. I would like to know whether it is a fact that Naxalite movement could also be responsible for this accident.

In the South Central Railway—it is actually the Central Railway—maintenance of railway track is not proper. This also could be a reason for such accidents.

The Government has appointed an enquiry commission in this matter and I wholeheartedly welcome this decision. May I know from the hon. Minister what specific steps and measures will be taken to avoid such accident in future?

These are a few points on which I seek clarification.

उपसभापति : जगदंबी प्रसाद यादव जी। चूंकि मैंने आपको कहा था लिख कर दीजिए, आप संक्षेप में बोलिए।

श्री जगदंबी प्रसाद यादव (बिहार) : माननीया उपसभापति महोदया, मैं दो तीन

तथ्यों की ओर मंत्री जी का ध्यान खींचना चाहता हूँ। एक तो प्रजातंत्र में दुर्घटना रोकने का महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य स्वर्गीय लाल बहादुर शास्त्री जी ने रेल मंत्री के जमाने में दिया था अपना इस्तीफा दे कर तो दुर्घटना न घटे, सरकारी अधिकारी समझे कि दुर्घटना से मंत्रालय का मंत्री का ध है और प्रीतिष्ठा तो जड़ी है ही। तो दुर्घटना को रोकने में कोई महत्वपूर्ण पार्ट क्या मंत्रालय और मंत्री जी अदा करना चाहते हैं? दूसरी बात मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि जहाँ एक बात नक्सलाइट की आई तो मैं तकनीकी बात भी उठाना चाहता हूँ कि इन दिनों बरसात के समाप्त होने के बाद सभी लाइनों पर ट्रेक्स की मरम्मत का काम बहुतायत से होता रहता है, तो क्या उस ट्रेक की लाइन की मरम्मत हो रही थी? और उस ट्रेक की मरम्मत में कहीं कोई गलत ढंग से छूट हो गयी, क्योंकि दो सौ मीटर ट्रेक खराब होने की बात आई है और दो सौ मीटर ट्रेक अभी खराब हो सकता है जबकि ट्रेक की रिपेयरिंग चल रही हो। इसलिए मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि उस सेक्टर में ट्रेक की क्या कहीं रिपेयरिंग चल रही थी। तीसरी बात मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि ट्रेक्स की देखभाल भी टाइम-टाइम पर होती रहती है कभी गाड़ी से कभी दूसरे प्रकार से भी। मंत्री जी ने जांच कराई है तो मैं यह भी जानना चाहता हूँ कि इस ट्रेक की कितने दिन पहले जांच पड़ताल कराई गयी। किसी गाड़ी का संयोग से पास हो जाना और किसी का संयोग से फंस जाना, मैं नहीं समझता हूँ कि इतना कहने से ट्रेक साफ हो जाएगा। ट्रेक तब तक टूटने लायक न हो जब तक कि पहली गाड़ी पास हो गयी हो लेकिन दूसरी गाड़ी पास होते होते उस ट्रेक की स्थिति बिगड़ गयी हो। इसलिए मैं इस हिसाब से जानना चाहता हूँ कि उस ट्रेक की जांच पड़ताल कितने दिन पहले हुई थी, कब हुई थी, किस प्रकार से हुई थी।

मैं इस प्रश्न के दूसरे भाग पर आना चाहता हूँ। आज भी आया है कि रेलवे कांसिंग पर मोटर से दुर्घटना हो गयी।

[श्री जगदम्बी प्रसाद यादव]

मैं एक दिन कलकत्ता से आ रहा था तो "राजधानी" ट्रक से टकरा गयी और ड्राइवर घायल हो गया। मैं इसलिए इस बात को कहना चाहता हूँ कि जो सावधानी चाहिए जो तीन शब्द, सुरक्षा सावधानी और समय लिखकर आपने टांग दिए हैं, लगता है कि आपके जो अधिकारी हैं उन्होंने इन तीनों शब्दों पर सावधानी देना छोड़ दिया है। जब क्रासिंग पर राजधानी टकरा सकती है और आज भी गाड़ी टकरा गयी, आठ आदमी मारे जाते हैं तो इसका मतलब है कि यह सावधानी का हिसाब बहुत पुराना है, तो इसको सुधारने के लिए आपने कौन से कदम उठाए हैं।

अंतिम बात कहना चाहता हूँ कि अगर जांच करने का नतीजा यही हो कि सबको लीप पोतकर बराबर कर दिया जाये और सबको बरी करके नाल दिया जाये... क्योंकि किसी न किसी बड़े अधिकारी से लेकर छोटे अधिकारी तक जरूर इन्काल्व होते हैं तो क्या फायदा हुआ। अतः मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि जो इस जांच पड़ताल में पड़ते हैं, ट्रक के देखने वाले, ट्रक को इन्कामिन करने वाले, सेफ्टी वाले, जिनके कारण यह दुर्घटना हुई है, जब इनकी जांच पड़ताल होती है तब इसका क्या प्रतिफल होता है। हमारे कई मित्रों ने भी कहा कि जब दुर्घटना होती है तो आपने स्टेटमेंट दे दिया लेकिन जांच पड़ताल का क्या प्रतिफल हुआ, इसकी जानकारी न सदन को मिलती है न सदस्यों को। तो कम से कम इसकी जानकारी देने की पद्धति कुछ विकसित करें अपने जमाने में तो हो सकता है कि लोग यह भी समझें कि इस जांच के बाद फिर पार्लियामेंट में यह प्रश्न उठ सकता है इसलिए जांच को इस बारीकी से करें कि सबको संतोष हो सके।

श्री शरद यादव : (उत्तर प्रदेश) : मैं दो तीन बातें मंत्री जी से पूछना चाहता हूँ। नम्बर एक इस बयान से कुछ भी जाहिर नहीं होता है। लगातार ट्रेंस के

एक्सिडेंट्स हो रहे हैं और लगातार हम सतही सफाई देने का काम करते रहते हैं। मैं मंत्री जी से पूछना चाहता हूँ कि अभी भी जो रेलवे ब्रिजें हैं उनमें कितने ऐसे हैं जिन की ट्रेंस एक्सपायर हो गयी है। अब वह इस काम के लिए नहीं बचे इसके बावजूद वह चलाये जा रहे हैं और यह जो एक्सप्रेस नागपुर के पास, कोटला के पास सिका एक्सिडेंट हुआ है, यहां ट्रक दो थीं या एक थी, यानी डबल लाईन थी या सिंगल लाईन थी?

तीसरा सवाल मैं यह पूछना चाहता हूँ कि यह जो फास्ट ट्रेंस चलाई जा रही हैं, इनके लिए जो ट्रक हैं, उस स्पेडि को बेयर कर सकते हैं कि नहीं कर सकते हैं?

भेरा चौथा सवाल यह है कि अभी तक जो जांच होती आई है एक्सिडेंट्स में, उन एक्सिडेंट्स के चलते कितने अधिकारियों पर, कितने वर्मचार्जियों पर आपने कार्यवाही की है?

अब इस ट्रक पर जो एक्सिडेंट हुआ है, इसमें यदि बड़े अधिकारियों पर आप कार्यवाही करेंगे, तो आगे के लिए एक्सिडेंट्स बचाये जा सकते हैं।

धन्यवाद।

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: Madam, I have heard the observations made by the hon. Members, and as usual the observations made by them clearly manifest their concern which, I can assure you, is totally shared by us. It is our endeavour to continuously try to reduce accidents and to take into account the very valuable suggestions and the concern expressed by the hon. Members from time to time.

Mr. Sukomal Sen talked about the lack of safety measures. As you know, Madam, a couple of years ago, when Mr. Bansi Lalji was the Railway Minister, a 10-point plan was put into motion to specifically try to reduce railway accidents and to create an

awareness from the highest officer to the lowest member of the staff on the Indian Railways. That plan of action has begun to yield results. We will not be satisfied until railway accidents are reduced to an absolute minimum. Here I would quote figures, but I would not like the hon. Members to misinterpret that these figures leave us in the railways with a sense of self-satisfaction. That is not the case. We will always endeavour to reduce these figures even further. In the first year 1985-86 when the new Rajiv Gandhi Government took office, Indian railway established a new record in the reduced number of railway accidents. The railway accidents went down by 10 per cent compared to the previous year and in the history of the Indian railways it was the lowest ever recorded. 1986-87, there was the further improvement of 12 per cent on that record low. This is a sad occasion. I do not want to express these figures, again as I said, in a sense of quoting our achievement, but I am happy to inform the hon. Members that over the record low last year, this year, the first six months compared to the first six months of last year have shown a further decrease in railway accidents of over 23 per cent. I think this is a substantial achievement for which the credit must go to the railway officers and the railway staff who have endeavoured, in spite of, as Mr. Vithalrao Jadhav mentioned, our traffic having gone up phenomenally. Even the gross number of railway accidents has come down this year by 23 per cent over the record low of last year and the record low the year before. The awareness amongst the railway staff is also evinced by the fact that of the total number of railway accidents those which can be attributed to staff negligence have come down this year by almost 30 per cent which I think again is a substantial reduction. While I would not fail in expressing my concern and objective that the Railway Ministry is continuously trying to reduce these accidents, I feel that on such sad oc-

casions, let us not use them to detract from the exemplary efforts put in by the railway officers and members of the railway staff. I would not like the hon. Members to forget this—and I would like to remind them—that in the winter months when we snuggle into our blankets in these fast and super-fast trains which whiz through from Howrah to Delhi or from Delhi to Bombay, if your sleep is disturbed and you wake up at 2 in the morning and out of your blanket look out of the window as you pass a level crossing, you will find in these winter months, a scantily clad railway staff member showing you a green light. He is trying to ensure security of your train. There are thousands of such people who are devotedly working towards railway safety and I do not think we should try to use these occasions to misquote figures and detract from their efforts. Again, I would like to very clearly maintain that we are deeply concerned and we are not satisfied. However much the number of railway accidents may have been reduced, we will constantly keep striving in that direction to reduce them even further.

The track is patrolled every 24 hours by a keyman who inspects the track and weekly by the permanent way inspector. Bridges are also inspected and those bridges which may cause a little concern are inspected even more frequently, depending on the state of the bridge. However, if a bridge is considered dangerous, no time is lost in strengthening it or reconstructing it.

Shri Sukomal Sen did mention that the GT Express had passed earlier. In fact three trains had passed—16 UP had passed at 11.15, 15 Dn GT had passed at 12 o'clock and a railway electrification special had also passed at 12.30, about one hour before the accident. The track was found to be in perfect condition. I would like to mention that this is a newly re-laid track. Track renewal has been completed in the year 1986-

[Shri Madhav Rao Scindia]

87. There was sufficient ballast and the track was also in very good condition. Therefore it is very strange that one hour later, keys are found missing on 200 metres of track. Keys are a vital part. They are wedged in the track. There are jaw claws and they are wedged between the sleeper and the jaw claw. If they are removed, the track becomes loose. Now I am only indicating possibilities; I am not coming to any conclusions. Mr. Sukomal Sen did mention that I am trying to pass the buck. We in the Railway Ministry will not pass the buck. That is not our practice and it will not be our practice in the future also. However, I have indicated the possibilities. We can only come to any certain conclusions after the Commissioner of Railway Safety has completed his enquiry and given his report. But the strange part is this. Mr. Upendra has been a railwayman and will surely understand the technicalities of this. These 200 metres over which the keys are missing are on the outer fringe of the curve and as you well know when a train is taking a curve, the strain is much more on the outer curve. It just indicates somebody who knows something about railway movement. These are just indications; I would not like you to feel that I have come to any conclusion. It is somebody who knows that the Tamilnadu Express is passing at a particular time and who knows which part of the track will be most dangerous.

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: The papers have mentioned that I was on the train. I hope you are not hinting at that.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: I am glad you were not on the train. So the track becomes loose and the moment the train passes over the loose track, it overshoots its appointed place and naturally then the train derails. But we will await the Commissioner of Railway Safety's enquiry report. The railways themselves also of course internally have to conduct

their own enquiring which we will be doing totally independently. An honourable Member—I think it was, possibly, Mr. Sukomal Sen himself—asked, why a joint inquiry? It is not. It is a joint inspection of the evidence. The inquiry will be totally independent. This particular office of the Commissioner of Railway Safety comes under the Ministry of Civil Aviation. It does not even come under our Ministry. So, it is an independent, statutory, inquiry and I can assure you that we will not attempt, in any way, to prejudice the findings of the Commissioner of Railway Safety. We ourselves want to learn the real causes and, learning from those causes, we would like to take measures to mend the state of affairs, if required.

Mr. Radhakrishna mentioned about the Vijayawada derailment. There was a derailment in Vijayawada—he is quite right. I am once again sorry to say that this matter of tampering with the track is something which is extremely worrying for us. We have 100,000 of track kilometres and 61,000 of route kilometres and, from that point of view, it is a matter of great concern because every case of tampering with the track is something which can cause tremendous problems to us. In Vijayawada too, two fishplates and four bolts were found missing at the point of derailment. So, there has been a problem there also. He also talked about the collision of the bus and the train at a level crossing yesterday. Here also, it is something which is beyond our control. The bus driver, apparently, was driving rather fast and his brakes seemed to have failed. At a manned level crossing where the gates are closed, there is very little that we can do; If somebody chooses to ram the gate on one side and go along with it and ram into the gate on the other side, here is very little that the Railway Administration can do. We can only try to create some awareness amongst the road users, which we are attempting to do. There are attempts. We are trying, through

our Public Relations Officers, through publicity, to create this awareness among the road users. But, I am afraid, in these cases we are totally dependent on the road users.

Mr. Radhakrishna also said that railway accidents were increasing. This is not a fact; I have just quoted figures, Mr. Pramod Mahajan also talked about railway accidents increasing. As I have said earlier, there has been a very significant decrease.

The local police are already seized of the matter. They are conducting their own inquiry. I do not think that at this stage the CBI can be involved in it. It is a police matter and it really goes outside our jurisdiction, outside our purview. But, again, we would be very, very interested to know ultimately what conclusions the police arrive at. So that the police could examine every bit of evidence, we did not clear the track until the police gave us the green signal, and that is why we got the green signal about 24 hours later, after all the evidence had been examined by the police.

Mr. Vithal Jadhav talked about the maintenance of track. As the honourable Members know, when the new Administration took over, there were 20,000 kilometres of track due for renewal. That was the backlog that accumulated. In our railway plans since 1985-86, we have been allocating about 25 per cent of each annual plan to track renewal and we have been giving it tremendous priority. In fact, the backlog has now come down to between 15 and 16 thousand kilometres. This particular part of the track had been renewed last year and it was in good condition.

Mr. Banwarilal Purohit was on the train. He was very, very helpful to the other passengers; he was of great help to us also. I myself talked to him on the telephone and he did mention to me that in such cases he was normally very, very critical but

he had not enough words of praise for the alacrity with which the Railway Administration responded to the situation and the way they looked after not only the injured but also those passengers who were stranded. This is what Mr. Banwarilal Purohit conveyed to me over the telephone. Naxalites were also mentioned. Again, these are all aspects which will have to be examined by other agencies.

Jagdambi Prasadji also asked whether it is a lapse.

रेल पट्टी नवीनीकरण वहाँ हुआ था कि नहीं? दुर्घटना रेल पट्टी के कारण हुई कि नहीं? मैंने पूर्व में बताया कि इसी नवीनीकरण पिछले वर्ष हो चुका था और उस सेक्शन की रेल की हालत अच्छी थी। चिता की वहाँ बात नहीं थी। स्थिति संतोषजनक थी। आपने लेवल क्रॉसिंग एक्सीडेंट के बारे में भी उल्लेख किया। उसके बारे में भी मैंने बताया है। शरद यादव साहब ने रेलवे ब्रिज के बारे में पूछा है। प्रतिवर्ष रेलवे ब्रिज का निरीक्षण किया जाता है। जो रेलवे ब्रिज खतरनाक दिखते हैं, उन रेलवे ब्रिज को तत्काल सुधारने का काम किया जाता है, मरम्मत का काम किया जाता है या दुबारा उस स्थान पर रेलवे ब्रिज निर्मित किया जाता है। यह सेक्शन डबल लाइन सेक्शन नहीं है। यह सिंगल लाइन सेक्शन है। जहाँ कीज निकाले गए थे, वे रेल ट्रैक जहाँ कर्व लेता है, बेंड होता है, उसी जगह पर निकाले गए थे। ब्रिज के पहले किंगज निकाले गए थे। मैं बताना चाहूंगा कि हमारी पटरियों का एक्जामिनेशन होता रहता है और ऐसे सेक्शंस जहाँ ट्रैक रिनुअल होना आवश्यक है या ऐसे सेक्शन जहाँ लाइन का नया-नया रिनुअल हुआ है वहाँ स्पीड रिस्ट्रिक्शंस लगाए जाते हैं और इन स्पीड रिस्ट्रिक्शंस के अनुसार जगह-जगह पर ट्रेन चलती हैं। यहाँ कोई स्पीड रिस्ट्रिक्शंस नहीं था। 110 किलोमीटर तक स्पीड क्लियर की गयी थी और हमारा अनुमान है कि ट्रेन 90-100 किलोमीटर के दरमियान चल रही थी।

[Shri Madhavrao Scindia]

This is all the information that the Members wanted. I would once again, on behalf of the Railway Administration, like to express my deep regrets for this accident. My deep condolences to the bereaved families. I would also like to tell the hon. Members that of the 13 grievously injured, eight are now totally out of danger, and with the blessings of Almighty, I am sure, that the remaining five also will survive the ordeal.

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO (Jammu and Kashmir): Payment of compensation?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: The *ex-gratia* amount has been distributed. Rs. 5,000 to the bereaved families and Rs. 1,000 to the grievously injured and Rs. 500 to those who have suffered minor injuries, simple injuries.

But, again, I would not like this amount to be confused with compensation. This is only an *ex-gratia* amount which is for immediate utilisation, for immediate requirement. The compensation amount will be decided by the *ad hoc* Claims Commissioner who is appointed in consultation with the Pradesh Sarkar. After the *ad hoc* Claims Commissioner comes to his conclusion, he will tell us how much compensation is to be paid and to whom it will be paid. This will be settled by the Claims Commissioner. That process will also be put into motion very soon.

श्री नरया सिंह (राजस्थान) : माननीय मंत्री जी आपने चालू वर्ष में मेल और एक्सप्रेस गाड़ियों के बारे में बताया लेकिन चालू वर्ष में माल गाड़ियों के जो एक्सीडेंट्स हुए हैं, उनके बारे में भी बताएं ।

श्री माधवराव सिधिया : मैडम, यह जो आंकड़े हैं, ये सभी हमारी जो गाड़ियाँ चलती हैं चाहे मेल हो, चाहे एक्सप्रेस हो, चाहे फास्ट हो चाहे सुपर फास्ट हों, सभी सम्मिलित हैं।

STATUTORY RESOLUTION
 APPROVING THE CONTINUANCE
 IN FORCE OF PRESIDENT'S PRO-
 CLAMATION UNDER ARTICLE
 356 IN RESPECT OF PUNJAB—
contd.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now we will take up the statutory Resolution for discussion. Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal was on his legs. He may please continue.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Madam, when we adjourned for lunch, I was saying that the Akali Dal has failed to present a strong leadership which is imperative and in fact a dire necessity at this juncture to overcome the present impasse. This is so because the view of the Akalis has always been jaundiced, and their approach guided by the narrow political considerations which are sometimes at variance even with the larger State and national interests. They have now voiced their opposition to violence and terrorism. But they still have to demonstrate the firm and resolute determination to stand up against terrorism and fight the menace to the finish. Till then their clamour for the revocation of the President's Rule in the State would not convince even the Punjabis.

My learned friend, who initiated the debate, is, unfortunately, not present in the House at the moment. He very vociferously pleaded for the reinstatement of the last Government headed by Shri Barnala. Madam, I agree that the intellectual power of some of the Opposition friends, particularly from the CPM group, is great, but their opinion of themselves is still greater; and sometimes, unfortunately, that tends to overtake the former. For over 20 minutes he tried to analyse the Punjab situation, but not once did he mention the most important factor involved in the Punjab situation today; and that was the emergence of the Panthic Committee. I do not know whether my friend has even heard of the name of the Panthic