

Wrong news of Babu Jagjivan Ram's death on All India Radio

*24. SHRI GAYA CHAND BHUYAN†

DR. BAPU KALDATE:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the early morning bulletin of the All India Radio on 4th July, 1986 carried the news item about the demise of Babu Jagjivan Ram;

(b) whether Government have conducted an enquiry in this regard; and

(c) if so, the names of the concerned officials held responsible for this lapse and the action taken against them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI V. N. GADGIL): (a) The news of the passing away of Babu Jagjivan Ram was broadcast as a flash in the 0600 hrs. Hindi bulletin on July 4, 1986. It was the first item in the 0605 hrs. English bulletin on the same day. Soon thereafter AIR learnt that the information regarding the death of Babu Jagjivan Ram was not correct. Therefore, the news was contradicted with regret in the Hindi bulletins at 07.00 hrs. and 0800 hrs. and in the 0810 hrs. English bulletin.

(b) and (c) An enquiry into this matter is being conducted.

SHRI GAYA CHAND BHUYAN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is not the first time that this lapse has been committed by this Department. First, when the great leader, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee died, it was broadcast after ten hours; it was kept hidden for ten hours. At another time it broadcasted death of the great leader, Jayaprakash Narayan. Again this thing has happened.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: You did it.

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Gaya Chand Bhuyan.

SHRI GAYA CHAND BHUYAN: Yes, I am telling regarding the inefficiency of the Department. (Interruptions) Also, there was the delay in the announcement of Smt. Indira Gandhi's death. Again this thing has happened. And the most interesting part of it is that the hon. Prime Minister, when he was going to Mauritius, got that news and hurried to the hospital. Who is that man? It is not the PIO who is now blamed for it. The PIO is not blamed for it but some other person who told the Prime Minister that Babu Jagjivan Ram was dead. Therefore, I want to know who that person is. After that the PIO informed the Broadcasting Department for broadcasting it. Who is that man? I want to know it from the Prime Minister. Who is that man who informed the Prime Minister regarding Babu Jagjivan Ram's death?

SHRI V. N. GADGIL: Sir, the question relates to AIR, and as far as I am concerned and the Ministry is concerned, I can reply only to this, as to how AIR came to broadcast, and that is precisely under enquiry. Who informed, who took the news, who sent it to the news room, who edited, who permitted—these are the matters which I have to investigate. So, if any such question is asked, I can only say, "Let the enquiry be over and then I can react to it."

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: The enquiry should not take more than one day. These are all delaying tactics of the Government. (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Second supplementary, Mr. Bhuyan. Anybody else who speaks will lose his opportunity to put his supplementary.

SHRI GAYA CHAND BHUYAN: I would like to know whether the enquiry as stated by the hon. Minister is just a formal thing. Always these things go on, and after some time it is just forgotten, and the real man who is the culprit, is promoted. So, Sir, I would like to know whether the hon. Minister will tell specifically, when such an important thing has happened, why the enquiry is not yet over by this time and how much time it will take. (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you all speak, there will be no opportunity for the Minister to speak. Therefore, allow him to speak.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: I also have a submission that this is a serious question. There should be no laughter or this type of amusing which is going on in this. I oppose and object to it. It is not a question of amusing. Mr. Ghafoor, Mr. Buta Singh and Mr. Makwana were seen jeering. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am on my legs. It is a serious matter, and that is why I cut short the previous question and gave the opportunity. But it is you Members who are making it a sort of unimportant question. Both the sides, I say, the other side also. You also do it.

Now the Minister will answer.

SHRI V. N. GADGIL: Sir, I respectfully agree that it is a serious matter. All I can say at this stage is that on that day I happened to be abroad. On the 11th I came back. As soon as I came back, the enquiry was set in. Various aspects of that incident have to be gone into.

श्री राम उद्वेश सिंह : एक आदमी का पता लगाना है कि किस आदमी ने समाचार दिया और और इसको पता लगाने में आपको (*अवधान*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: All of you, sit down please. If the hon. Member goes on interfering like this. I will have to take action.

Mr. Minister please go ahead (*Interruptions*) No side comments please.

SHRI V. N. GADGIL: I would like to go into this question—it is a serious question—not merely with regard to fixing the responsibility but what should be done as to procedure so that such incidents do not recur. I have myself gone through the various instructions that were previously laid down, and I have come to a tentative conclusion that there are some lacunae. Separate instructions are necessary for Doordarshan. For example, also find that there are specific instructions on how the voracity or otherwise of the news

should be confirmed in the case of certain dignitaries. There are no guidelines on how it should be checked in the case of other persons. So, all these aspects have to be gone into, and merely the enquiry should not be confined to fixing responsibility in this particular incident. Therefore, I would like to go into it very deeply since all the hon. Members agree it is a serious matter.

डा. बापू कालिदास : अध्यक्ष महोदय, इन्क्वायरी का मामला आपका कितने दिन चलेगा, यह हमको तो पता नहीं है। लेकिन...

If you really feel that it is so serious, then, the enquiry should also taken place seriously and it should be completed as early as possible.

हमको सबसे बड़ा डर यह लगता है कि इसमें किसी को स्कैंडल बनाने का प्रयास चल रहा है यह बात हम आपको स्पष्ट कर देते हैं।

(*Interruptions*). Don't get agitated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Government Business should not be interfered with the Question.

डा. बापू कालिदास : मैं कहता हूँ एक बात तो माफ है कि सरकार ने बापू जी की रक्षा के लिए और उनके ऊपर ध्यान रखने के लिए मिनिस्ट्री को कहा था कि 24 आदर्श दिवस रखें।

So, is it not the responsibility of the Government....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Sir, we want Half-an-Hour Discussion on this Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can make an application and the Chair will consider it on merits.

Now, we will take up Papers to be Laid on the Table.