

**STATEMENT BY DEPUTY MINISTER
IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE,
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION RE
CERTAIN ALLEGATIONS MADE
AGAINST HIM**

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION (SHRI S. D. MISRA) :

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to make a statement. On the afternoon of the 18th August, 1966, I learnt from certain Members of Rajya Sabha that Shri Raj Narain Singh, an hon. Member, had made certain allegations against me on the floor of the House. As I was not present in the House at that time, I obtained a copy of the day's proceedings the next morning and went through it. I find that the hon. Member has made two allegations against me, one regarding asking the police to disperse the crowd through lathi-charge on the 13th August at Mirzapur and the other regarding my father's firm which he had alleged is not registered for avoiding labour laws and avoiding taxes. I beg to place the facts about both these allegations before this House. As regards the first, *i.e.*, the alleged lathi-charge at Mirzapur, briefly the facts are like this.

I arrived at Mirzapur from Delhi on the 12th August. I was to address a public meeting organised by the City Congress Committee there on the 13th. I reached the meeting place at 7 p.m., along with the President of the Zila Parishad and other friends. We found that about a score of workers of some political parties, including the Socialist Party, along with a dozen of children, were shouting slogans like 'Shyam Dhar Misra go back', 'Congress Murdabad'. They held their party flags and also black flags in their hands. They also had a few placards displayed on cardboards bearing various slogans in Hindi, *viz.*, 'Congress Murdabad', 'Gold Control Order an atrocity on people', 'Price rise shame for Congress', 'Promise for Ganga bridge exposed', —it is a local problem— 'House tax on municipality a crime', 'Shyam Dhar Misra go back', etc. The City Magistrate and other District Officers, who were also present on the spot to discharge their normal functions, tried to cool down the atmosphere by making re-

quests to the demonstrators to put an end to shouting, as they had already given full-throated expression to their viewpoints.

In the midst of all this, we went up to the platform. Thereupon the demonstrators entered the arena of the public meeting and occupied almost the centre of the ground. The meeting was being attended by about 2,000 to 3,000 people. The demonstrators did not pay any heed to the repeated requests made by several persons, and went on shouting their slogans. Every time the Secretary of the City Congress Committee took the mike, they started shouting. They did not allow anyone to speak. The place was full of slogans and various types of abuses by these demonstrators. I along with several other Congressmen begged with folded hands to these demonstrators not to disturb the proceedings of the meeting, but they did not desist from their activities. Instead, they hurled more abuses and performed mimicry. They said that they will not abandon shouting and would not allow the meeting to take place. After one hour, that is, at about 8 o' clock, they became violent and started throwing brickbats on the platform. Two boys standing by our side got serious injuries on their heads and started bleeding. After this the demonstrators started breaking the bulbs and one of them rushed to the platform and broke even one of the two mikes.

The allegation of the hon. Member that there was a lathi-charge by the Police is not correct. There was absolutely no lathi charge at any stage. The police authorities, however, only arrested some 13 people on the spot and took them away to the lock-up. Thereafter, the meeting started and went on peacefully for about 1-1/2 hours when I addressed it. As far as I am concerned, I neither requested nor asked the police to take any action. The City Magistrate and some other District Officers who were present there, took the action on their own.

As for the second allegation may I respectfully submit that, the least I can say is, it is unfair for a Member of this House to make allegations against my father who is not here to defend himself, and in whose business concern I have no interest or share whatsoever. The hon. Member

[Shri S. D. Misra.] has said that my father has opened a company which is unregistered for the last many years. My father has been running business of carpets for the last about 25 years, long before I became even a Member of Parliament. It is a firm duly registered under the Partnership Act. I am not a partner in the firm, nor have I got anything to do with its management. The firm, as I know, is being regularly assessed to taxes including income-tax.

The firm was not registered under the Factory Act because, I understand from my father, it did not attract the provisions of the Act as the number of persons employed was less than 20. But even then, for the goodwill and protection of labour and for greater caution, so that no chance of allegation remains, it has now already got registered under the Factory Act.

The hon. Member has referred to certain incidents having taken place on the 10th July 1966, at Kathauta, Gopiganj a place about 40 miles away from Varanasi my district and the hon. Member's district, where my father is having this carpet concern. I was not present there at that time nor am I personally concerned in any way with any of the incidents. On enquiry from my father, I understand that there was some dispute with some other establishment near this firm's premises, regarding which police are making investigation. On this account also Sir, it would be improper for me or anyone to make any reference while the investigations are in police hands and are going on.

Mr. Chairman, kindly permit me to say that these allegations are wrong and baseless.

(Some hon. Members stood up)

SHRI B. K. P. SINHA (Bihar) : Sir, may I respectfully draw your attention to rule 251 of the Rules of Procedure :

"A statement may be made by a Minister on a matter of public importance with the consent of the Chairman but no question shall be asked at the time the statement is made"

It is very clear that in such a situation there can be no further questions. Now, Sir, in this statement and in the statement previously made by the hon. Member opposite two matters have been brought in or

two matters have cropped up, both of which are subject matters of police investigation. They are likely to go to the court. In such circumstances, apart from the rules of this House, it becomes necessary for us to restrain ourselves and not make it a matter of discussion in this House because ultimately this may prejudice not only the investigation but prejudice the trial of these cases if they go to the court.

SHRI G. MURAHARI (Uttar Pradesh) : Sir, I want certain clarifications.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA (West Bengal) : Did he rise on a point of order ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : It is his point of view. I wish to point out that I have allowed the Minister to make his statement under rule 241.

SHRI B. K. P. SINHA : Sir, I will respectfully draw your attention to that rule :

"A member may, with the permission of the Chairman, make a personal explanation although there is no question before the Council, but in this case no debatable matter may be brought forward, and no debate shall arise."

I respectfully request you, Mr. Chairman, that no debatable matter should be brought forward.

MR. CHAIRMAN : As I told you, I have allowed that under rule 241.

SHRI G. MURAHARI : Sir, I would only reinforce what Mr. Sinha has said just now that no debatable matter should be brought out, but the Minister in his personal statement has brought out a number of debatable points for which I have to ask for clarification. *(Interruption)* I just want to ask for clarification on a few matters. He said in the first place that the demonstrators abused.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please listen to me. We are not considering the issue. Mr. Rajnarain in the course of his remarks on the calling attention notice had made certain statements when the Minister was not here. So he was making a statement, and that should be the end of it.

SHRI G. MURAHARI : He has made his statement of fact. That is why I want a clarification.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Sir, here you are perfectly within your authority to allow him to make a statement of personal explanation. Two things are there. One is whether he has ordered the police to do lathi charge. He could have said "no".

MR. CHAIRMAN : That is what he said.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : In the first part instead of merely saying that he did not ask the police to do any lathi charge, he gave a complete version of what happened there, which is a one-sided version, to put it mildly. (*Interruption*) It is personal explanation relating to the conduct of the Minister.

SHRI M. RUTHNASWAMY (Madras) : Sir, I am raising a point of order. The Chairman has said that there should be an end of the question, and I request the Chairman to make an end of the question.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I think it will end there.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : The only thing I am pointing out to you, and I hope my friend will understand, is that it is not a question that in a personal explanation one should answer certain matters relating to it. He said that he had not ordered the police and so on. You will have noted here that his statement was quite lengthy. What did the police do ? Thirteen persons were arrested . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN : My feeling is that it is only a personal statement. He was involved in the matter. He had to say so.

SHRI G. MURAHARI : He has answered in his statement that the establishment was not registered under the Factories Act. He says that it has now been registered. I would like to know when it was registered.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The important point is that he says that he is not one of the proprietors.

SHRI G. MURAHARI : He has given a long list of happenings at that place.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Murahari, you know how difficult it is to say the right thing in one sentence. M78 RS/66

SHRI A. P. CHATTERJEE (West Bengal) : The hon. Minister gave a personal explanation under rule 241. While giving that personal explanation, he has made allegations how certain persons broke up the mike, how certain persons threw brickbats and all these. These are debatable points. We have also our points. I want to take . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN : I have allowed that statement . . .

(*Shri C. Murahari rose*)

No, Mr. Murahari, I will not allow any further discussion.

Mr. Chatterjee, I will not allow any further discussion. Please sit down.

SHRI G. MURAHARI : He has made an allegation.

SHRID. L. SEN GUPTA (West Bengal) : I would not have . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN : You are saying that you do not want to say any thing.

SHRI D. L. SEN GUPTA : On a point of order. Please listen to my point of order.

I would not have joined my friends on this issue if it had not led to a precedent. I am relying on rule 241. I am within my limit. Without entering into a debate, there is a difference between a question and a debate. When a Minister makes a statement, certainly we are entitled to put questions by way of seeking clarification. Here also when the statement is made under rule 241, a debate is prohibited. If anybody says that he can enter into a debate, I will say that he is wrong. Within the meaning of rule 241, I am only debarred from entering into a debate, I am not debarred from putting questions. So, please allow my point of order and allow me to put a question.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I understand your point.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Uttar Pradesh) : I want to raise another point of order. You have allowed the Minister to offer a personal explanation under rule 241. But rule 241 clearly lays I down that a personal explanation can be offered only by a Member and not by a

[Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee] Minister. The hon. Minister is not a Member of this House, he is a member of the Lok Sabha. So, he should not have been allowed to make any personal explanation under rule 241. I can understand your permission under any other rule. May I read out . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN : You need not read it out, I have got it. You make that distinction. It was in this House that a statement was made by Shri Rajnarain. He is the Minister, and since the Minister has come to this House, he has made it.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : If he is a Minister . . .

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Because he is a Minister all the conditions stipulated under rule 241 do not apply ?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : They do not apply.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : You say that he has been allowed under rule 241 and rule 241 says that no debatable points will be made. But he is the Minister, he has . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN : Do not make it a question of fine point of law. The statement was made. He said what he had to say, and I have allowed him as I would allow a Member to make a statement.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Allow a Minister, not a Member.

(Shri Rajnarain rose)

SHRI M. M. DHARIA (Maharashtra) : On this point of order raised by Shri Vajpayee, I would like to say something, if Shri Rajnarain can raise the same point of order.

श्री राजनारायण (उत्तर प्रदेश) : मैं अपोजीशन का भी और विशेषकर श्री श्यामधर मिश्र का भी अनुग्रहीत हूँ और शुक्रिया अदा करता हूँ और आपका विशेष तौर से कि आपने चाहे वह नियम में रहा हो, या न रहा हो, श्री श्यामधर जी को कहने का मौका दिया कि वह अपनी सफाई सदन में पेश करें। यह बात आपने अच्छी की।

कुछ माननीय सदस्य : आपको भी दिया था ?

श्री राजनारायण : मुझे भी दिया था और मैं फिर अपनी ओर से आपका शुक्रिया अदा करता हूँ। किन्तु आप से इतना ही निवेदन करता हूँ कि हमने एक सब्स्टेन्टिव मोशन दिया था।

श्री सभापति : आपने दिया था और वह अन्डर कंसिडरेशन है।

श्री राजनारायण : वह आपने कह दिया है कि कंसिडरेशन की हालत में है और इसी विषय में दिया है। लेकिन मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि मिनिस्टर का जो पब्लिक कंडक्ट है उसके बारे में सदन में विचार किया जाय। क्या यह मामला भी आपके विचाराधीन है? मेरा निवेदन है कि आप कृपा करके इस सम्पूर्ण मसले को प्रिविलेज कमेटी में भेज दें कि श्री श्यामधर मिश्र ने विलफुल्ली सदन को सत्य से सपरेस किया, डिसीव किया और क्या काशी प्रसाद एण्ड सन्स कंपनी में उनके शेयर्स . . .

श्री सभापति : श्री राजनारायण जी, जरा सुनिये, आपने एक सब्स्टेन्टिव मोशन भेजा है। you should not insist like this. अगर मैं उसको मंजूर करूंगा तो आप सब बातें कह सकते हैं और वे भी सब बातें कह सकते हैं। अगर मैं मंजूर नहीं करूंगा तो आप भी चुप रहें और वे भी चुप रहें। आपने एक चीज के बारे में पहले कहा और उन्होंने भी कह दिया है।

श्री राजनारायण : मिर्जापुर में "फादर एण्ड सन्स" नाम की जो फैक्टरी थी क्या वह फैक्टरी एक्ट के मातहत रजिस्टर नहीं थी और इधर एक महीने के अन्दर वह रजिस्टर करा दी गई है? उन्हें ईमानदारी से कहना चाहिये कि क्या उनकी जानकारी में यह बात है कि यह फैक्टरी कब रजिस्टर कराई गई? जब उन्होंने अपने पिता को सजेस्ट किया तब जून के महीने में वह रजिस्टर कराई गई?

श्री सभापति : श्री राजनारायण जी, आप बैठ जाइये।

श्री राजनारायण : श्री श्यामधर मिश्र ने सत्य को सपरेस किया है और हाउस को डिसीव किया है और मैं चाहता हूँ कि यह मामला प्रिविलेज कमेटी में जाना चाहिये ।

MOTION RE DEVALUATION OF THE RUPEE—Contd.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Motion regarding devaluation of the rupee. Shri Babubhai Chinai.

SHRI BABUBHAI M. CHINAI (Maharashtra) : Sir, so much has been said on the subject of devaluation of the rupee that what I have to say today may seem to be either repetitive or a little familiar. Insofar as devaluation is a major decision not only in the career of the Government but also in the life of a nation, it casts a heavy responsibility on Parliament. It is up to us, the legislators, to objectively assess the manifold implications. I feel that at this stage no useful purpose will be served by merely applauding or decrying the measure. Nor is the present the time for anger or self-pity.

As the decision has been taken, it is urged from the Treasury Benches that the need to go into the reasons for devaluation are not important. I do not agree with this view. I believe that it is essential to discuss the 'why' of devaluation—economic and other reasons which have led up to this drastic measure. The 'why' of devaluation is no less important than the *pros* and *cons*.

I will first deal with what is popularly called political arm-twisting. It is alleged that the Government of India have succumbed to the pressure of international financial institutions and the US Government. This allegation, to say the least, is mischievous and misleading. Let us pause for a minute and ask ourselves how these international financial institutions and the Government of the United States of America gain from our devaluing the rupee. They will not get more, say, by way of dollars, or sterling. They will not benefit if devaluation worsens further our economic situation. In fact, as creditors, they must be interested in the viability of our economy. Therefore, I put it to the House that the suggestion that emanated from overseas is a friendly one and that is in our interest. At the same time I will not minimise the problem

that confronted our Government. The choice was devaluation and aid, or no devaluation and economic stalemate. I, for one, fail to understand as to why our Government spokesmen do not frankly and boldly admit their predilection for the obvious choice. Is it derogatory to our national prestige to say that we accepted friendly advice ? Is it a crime for any Government to do what is best by the country ? It is vainglorious and irresponsible for anyone to say that we shall be able to push forward without external assistance.

Let me now come to the economic reasons. According to me, the circumstances in which the decision to devalue was taken comprised mainly of three factors : (1) the rise in prices; (2) the fall in production; and (3) the balance of payments difficulties. All these reasons are, in a way, sub-reasons. The principal reason lies in faulty planning, excessive spending and heavy taxation.

Prices began rising because on the one hand Government were spending too much and, on the other, there was a decline in agricultural production. Agricultural production in 1965-66 was 73 million tonnes only as compared to the normal requirements of about 90 million tonnes. This short-fall was brought about mainly by unfavourable monsoons. It must be admitted that our agricultural policy was not wholly production-oriented and if right measures were taken the short-fall would not have been so much.

Industry was not working at full capacity because of the shortage of industrial raw materials, particularly imported. The rate of growth last year was about five per cent, as compared to the average growth of about 9 per cent.

The balance of payments difficulty arose because (a) exports were stagnant at about Rs. 800 crores; (b) imports were rising and were about Rs. 1,400 crores; and (c) there was a pause in foreign aid following conflict with Pakistan.

Before I pass on to the question as to whether devaluation by itself will prove to be an adequate remedy to our major problems and what supplementary measures are to be taken, I wish to refer to the dramatic manner in which the devaluation decision was announced. It was preceded