

STATEMENT RE ACCIDENT TO
ROOF TRAVELLERS ON A TRAIN
NEAR BALLIA JUNCTION

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI
SHAH NAWAZ KHAN): Sir, on behalf
of Sardar Swaran Singh, I beg to make
the following statement.

With regret, I have to inform the
House of an unfortunate incident
which occurred on 11th November,
1962 shortly after midnight between
Manjhi and Bakulha stations on the
North Eastern Railway.

At about 1.30 hours on the night
between 10th and 11th November,
1962, when 67-UP Muzaffarpur-Alla-
habad City Fast Passenger arrived at
Suraimanpur station on Chupra-
Varanasi metre gauge section of the
North Eastern Railway, certain pas-
sengers reported to the Station Master
on duty that some persons travelling
on the roof of the train had been hit
by overhead structures of the bridge
while the train was passing over the
bridge situated between Manjhi and
Bakulha stations.

On a search being made on the roof
of the train at Suraimanpur station,
six persons were found to be dead
and another five seriously injured. A
search party headed by the Station
Master was also sent immediately by
an engine and a brakevan to search
the track upto Manjhi. Simultaneous-
ly medical aid was rushed from
Chupra under the charge of a railway
doctor. Local railway officers at
Varanasi and Sonapur proceeded to
the site immediately on receipt of
information. The Chief Commercial
Superintendent and the Chief Medical
Officer of North Eastern Railway also
proceeded to the site from Gorakhpur.

The District officials at Ballia and
Chupra were also advised immediately.

According to the latest information
available, twenty five persons died
and another three were seriously in-
jured. The number of killed included
those who were seriously injured and
subsequently died. The three injured
persons are receiving medical atten-
tion in Ballia Civil Hospital and are
reported to be progressing.

Reports received show that the train
was running with its full normal com-
position of coaches. A number of pas-
sengers mostly proceeding from way-
side stations to Ballia for the Kartik
Poornamashi fair got on to the roof
of the train. Efforts were made at
Chupra, where the train was detained
for about twenty minutes, and at
Revelganj, the last stopping station of
the train where the train was detained
for about fifteen minutes, to get the
passengers to come down from the
roof of the train. The assistance of
Government Railway Police was also
sought and obtained for this purpose.
It appears that despite efforts of and
exhortations by the railway staff, some
persons managed to remain on the
roof.

The Additional Commissioner of
Railway Safety, Lucknow, is holding
an enquiry into the accident today.

SHRI A. B. VAJPAYEE (Uttar Pra-
desh): Sir, according to the latest
press reports more than hundred per-
sons are reported to have been killed
in this accident. May I know whe-
ther the hon. Minister has any infor-
mation in this regard?

SHRI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN: Sir, I
have also read that news in this
morning's papers but the information
we have got is the one that I have
given to the House.

SHRI A. B. VAJPAYEE: May I know
whether fresh information will be col-
lected and the House informed about
it in due course?

SHRI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN: Cer-
tainly, Sir.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY (Mysore): Apart from the information, may I know whether the Station Master and other people who permitted the train to move from the station have been kept under suspension?

SHRI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN: No, Sir. I have just submitted that the station staff did their best to persuade the persons to come down and the Government Railway Police was also called in. They tried to get these gentlemen to come down. They got down when they were asked and they again jumped on to the train again.

SHRI BAIRAGI DWIBEDY (Orissa): How was the train allowed to move without clearing the passengers on the roof of the train?

MR. CHAIRMAN: He has already explained that they were made to get down and when the train started moving they jumped on to it again.

SHRI BAIRAGI DWIBEDY: How can they jump on to the roof while the train is moving?

PROF. M. B. LAL (Uttar Pradesh): It is very difficult to jump on to the roof of a train while the train is moving.

SHRI G. MURAHARI (Uttar Pradesh): It is not a question of 'some people' but hundreds of them. It is not easy for hundreds of people to jump on to the train.

SHRI K. SANTHANAM (Madras): May I know whether any categorical instructions have been issued to the Station Masters not to allow any train to move with anybody on the roof?

SHRI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN: The instructions are there but then the choice is between stabling the train or persuading the people to come down and then move the train.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA (West Bengal): The answer is not satisfactory. The question was whether any categorical instructions have been given to the Station Masters and others concerned not to allow the train to move when people are on the roof of a train? Is it not possible for Government to see that they get down before the train moves because they do not sit there just for the sake of sitting?

SHRI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN: I have already explained that even when the train was moving some people were trying to get on to the roof.

SHRI PANNALAL SARAOGI (West Bengal): As this is a preliminary report and a committee of enquiry has been appointed for this purpose I think it will be well advised if the report of the committee of enquiry is made available to the House.

SHRI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN: The Assistant Commissioner of Railway Safety is holding an enquiry. He will be submitted the report to the Ministry of Transport under whom he works. As far as we are concerned, we shall have no objection to laying it on the Table of the House.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: In view of the fact that they cannot stop people from sitting on the roof of the trains why can't Government make some fencing arrangements on the roof so that people can stay there? You get them down before the train moves or you make safety arrangements on the roof.

SHRI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN: Sir, of all the people, my hon. friend, Shri Bhupesh Gupta, knows that there are many things which the Government wants to do but sometimes it is made difficult by the demonstrators.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think that is enough.