

RAJYA SABHA

Thursday, 24th April 1958

The House met at eleven of the clock, MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

MEMBERS SWORN

Shri Nawab Singh Chauhan (Uttar Pradesh)

Kazi Ahmad Hussain (Bihar)

Shri Ansaruddin Ahmed (West Bengal)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FIRING BY PAKISTANI ARMED FORCES ON

SYLHET-CACHAR BORDER

*44 { SHRI JUGAL KISHORE†:
SHRI MAHESWAR NAIK:
SHRI V. K. DHAGE:
SHRI V. C. KESAVA RAO:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Pakistani Armed Forces opened fire from across the Surma River Valley on Bhanga, an Indian frontier post on the Sylhet-Cachar border, in the months of March and April 1958 and if so, under what circumstances;

(b) whether there were other cases of firing by Pakistani Armed Forces on the Indian side of that border during this period and if so, how many;

(c) whether any damage was caused to Indians by such firing; and if so, the extent of damage caused; and

(d) whether Government have taken any steps to stop such occurrences?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI LAKSHMI MENON): (a) to (d). It is a fact that Pakistani Armed Forces

†The question was actually put on the floor of the House by Shri Jugal Kishore.

opened fire on Bhanga and other places on the Cachar-Sylhet border in March and April 1958. The details briefly are that on the 11th March 1958 Pakistani nationals supported by Pakistani Armed Forces personnel attempted to harvest crops planted illegally by them in the Char lands in the Surma river. When the Indian Police patrol protested, they were fired upon by Pakistani Armed Forces and had to return the fire in self-defence. The unprovoked firing by Pakistani forces later spread from the Rangpur-Leverputa area to Harinagar, Bhanga, Mahisasan, Barpunji, Latu and Madanpur areas between 11th and 27th March despite a cease-fire agreement arrived at on 21st March.

A second cease-fire was arrived at on the 27th March, but in spite of it, sporadic firing went on almost daily on the Cachar-Sylhet border from 27th March to 7th April. The affected area covered such places as Madanpur, Latu, Nijalalpur, Mahisasan and Bhanga Bazar.

The casualties on our side as a result of firing were one killed, three seriously wounded and five others wounded.

A meeting of the Divisional Commissioners of Assam and East Pakistan took place at Karimganj on 8th April and a fresh Cease-fire Agreement to be effective from 5-30 p.m. on 9th April was reached at the meeting.

After this last cease-fire agreement, Pakistani forces opened fire in Nathanpur area on 9th April. Pakistani forces also did not conform to certain terms of this agreement and Pakistani villagers violated Indian territory by fishing in the Surma river. The Assam authorities have lodged protests with the East Pakistan authorities against violation of Indian territory and breaches of the cease-fire agreement. We have also lodged protests with the Pakistan High Commissioner at Delhi and with the Government of Pakistan through our High Commissioner at Karachi.