

[Ms. Anu Aga]

ourselves. Can we listen to each other even when we disagree? Can we have healthy debates instead of just making political statements or disrupting the proceedings? Since we are on the subject, let me also submit that I am disappointed that I had to wait for two years for my maiden speech! Frequent turmoils and adjournments did not give me a chance. About 320 million children in this country deserve an excellent education. It is a daunting challenge. More than any other time in our society, we have the resources, ideas and skills to solve a problem of this magnitude. The question is: do we have the will? Are we willing to join hands and work together irrespective of our social background? More importantly, are we bold enough to dream beyond the realities of today? Are we bold enough to dream of the India we all wished to be? ...*(Time-bell rings)*... Let us prove that that we are capable of such dreams and have the will and fortitude to realize them. I invite each of my friends here to make this dream a reality. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Ms. Anu. Now, in the morning, there was a demand from some sections of the House that the hon. Railway Minister should make a statement on the accident occurred today. I hope you agree for that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yes, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, please.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS – *Contd.*

Incident occurred at unmanned level crossing on South Central Railway

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI D.V. SADANANDA GOWDA): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, Members of this House have shown their deep concern over the unfortunate incident occurred today at an unmanned level crossing in South Central Railway. With the permission of the Chair, I am making this Statement before this House.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I am pained to apprise the House regarding an unfortunate incident which has occurred today at an unmanned level crossing wherein one school bus belonging to Kakatiya Techno School carrying children dashed against the train engine of train no.57564 Nanded-Hyderabad Passenger at about 09.15 hrs. on 24.07.2014 between Wadiaram and Maisaipet railway stations on Nizamabad-Secunderabad section of Hyderabad Division of South Central Railway. In this incident, 18 school children including the bus driver lost their lives. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: But, here, it is written 12.

SHRI D.V. SADANANDA GOWDA: No, no. It is not a typical error. Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, while coming to the House, I, again, got in touch with my officers who are there on the spot....

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: This is the latest. What you have said is the latest.

SHRI D.V. SADANANDA GOWDA: Kindly rectify that as 18 instead of 12. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI ANANDA BHASKAR RAPOLU (Telangana): It is 26 now.

SHRI D.V. SADANANDA GOWDA: Sir, 18 school children including bus driver lost their lives whereas 18 children suffered injuries who have been shifted to nearby hospitals. This incident took place in Medak District of Telangana State at unmanned level crossing No. 233-C which has a relatively low traffic density (4850 Train Vehicle Unit as per the last Census). Visibility at the unmanned level crossing was clear from all sides and basic infrastructure such as road signs, speed breakers, whistle boards, levelled surface and proper approach roads are available.

Medical Relief was immediately arranged to the injured persons by rushing the Accident Relief Medical Train (ARME) and also about 10 road ambulances to the site. The injured children have been shifted to nearby hospitals with the assistance of local public and civil authorities. Accident Relief Medical Vans departed from Nizamabad and Secunderabad at 09.40 hrs. and 09.45 hrs respectively and reached the site at 11.15 hrs. Immediately, General Manager, South Central Railway, along with Departmental Heads and Divisional Railway Manager, Hyderabad, along with Divisional Heads rushed to the accident site and also the hospital. As per the preliminary information received, the incident occurred due to negligent driving by the driver of the school bus. The driver did not stop the vehicle at the Stop Board, short of the level crossing, to check for approaching trains, as prescribed in Section 131 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988.

On humanitarian grounds, an *ex-gratia* amount of ₹ two lakh each to the next of the kin of the deceased, ₹ one lakh to the grievously injured and ₹ 20,000 to persons who sustained simple injury, has been announced.

On behalf of the Railways and myself, I express deep condolences to the bereaved families and also express sincere sympathies to the injured. I trust, this House will join me in extending heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families.

SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK (Goa): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, why did the Minister come to the House with old figures? ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI ANANDA BHASKAR RAPOLU: Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK: Sir, the report that I have with me says that 25 people lost their lives. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No clarifications, but you can ask one question. ...*(Interruptions)*... You may ask one question. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI ANANDA BHASKAR RAPOLU: Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister's statement is just a cover. This is a matter of grave human concern. As per the information that we have at the moment, twenty-six children have lost their lives. Also, the assessment that he got through his official machinery may look right to him, that the driver, who also lost his life, may have caused this accident.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That is all right. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI ANANDA BHASKAR RAPOLU: But he should have, at least, shown a gesture by ordering immediate manning of such crossings. There are 640 unmanned gates in South Central Railway Zones.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That is your suggestion. You cannot ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI ANANDA BHASKAR RAPOLU: But, at least, he should have shown a gesture by addressing this important point. Also, their attitude towards doling out *ex-gratia* is pathetic. Why can't it be five lakh rupees? It cannot be a measure to ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay, you have made your suggestion. Now, let us continue with the discussion. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI Y.S. CHOWDARY (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, I associate myself with what the hon. Member has said. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Your suggestion is noted. ...*(Interruptions)*... The Minister has noted your suggestion. That is all. Sit down, please. The Minister has taken note of your suggestion. Now, let us continue with the discussion.

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): Sir, should we not have condolence?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We would be doing that tomorrow morning. ...*(Interruptions)*... It would be done tomorrow morning. There is a procedure for that. That will be followed. It would be done tomorrow morning. Now, Shrimati Kanimozhi.
