

Amethi account incoherent *Sanjay*

12.4.77

Express Correspondent

LUCKNOW, April 11.

Sardar Jodh Singh, Mr Sanjay Gandhi's hefty security officer, has been interrogated by the CID officials inquiring into the alleged attempt on the life of Mrs Gandhi's son on the night of March 14 near Amethi.

It is learnt that Mr Jodh Singh was taken to the Munshiganj crossing where shots were alleged to have been fired, from a jeep lying in ambush, on Mr Sanjay Gandhi. He was asked to describe the scene, the position of the two vehicles and explain his own role as the shadow of Mr Gandhi.

Mr Jodh Singh is reported to have drawn an incoherent picture and failed to explain satisfactorily as to why he himself did not lodge the first information report with the police which was his responsibility or chased the alleged assailants.

He denied having been on the steering wheel, though he is believed to have stated that he had earlier taken Mr Kamal Nath from Gouriganj to Amethi House in the same jeep. Mr Kamal Nath had stayed back but Mr Sanjay Gandhi,

Mr Veer Bahadur Singh and Mr Gulzari Lal Kalra had left for Gouriganj and were fired upon near the Munshiganj crossing.

Mr Jodh Singh, it is learnt, was not convincing on the issue of a vehicle parked on the wrong side in an inhospitable terrain and then being driven away when the other vehicle had stopped nearby.

Next to be interrogated is Mr Chhatar Singh, a police driver who is believed to have been with Mr

Sanjay Gandhi. Mr Chhatar Singh was in fact the driver of the jeep. What is baffling the C.I.D. is the purchase of a .32 bore weapon for Rs 4,500 in the name of Chhatar Singh. The sale of the weapon by a Sultanpur dealer has been shown on March 15 and it was personally handed over to him when he was with Mr Sanjay Gandhi.

The bullet which has been recovered from the back cushion of the seat on which Mr Sanjay Gandhi was sitting had been fired from a .32 calibre weapon. The other weapon of the same bore is believed to be owned by the District Magistrate of Sultanpur, Mr Afsar Hussain.

It is reported that Mr Afsar Hussain, who was staying in the inspection house with Mr Sanjay Gandhi at Amethi, for the first time before the incident, wanted to be introduced to the members of the security van, which used to accompany Mr Gandhi. To their great surprise the D.M. engaged them in a friendly chit-chat. When Mr Sanjay Gandhi boarded his jeep for going to Gouriganj, the security

Weather

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY:

Partly cloudy. A dust storm or a thunder storm is still possible. Much change in day temperature.

The maximum temperature on Monday was 34.5 degrees C (94.1 degrees F), 1 degree C below normal, and the minimum 23.1 degrees C (73.6 degrees F), 3 degrees C above normal.

The sun sets on Tuesday at 6.45 and rises on Wednesday at 5.59.

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Another amendment on the bill, by Mr Mohammad Yunus Saleem was withdrawn. Earlier, moving the bill for consideration, the Home Minister said

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men rushed to their own van to follow him. However they were asked by the D.M. to stay back and were told that Mr Gandhi resented the security arrangement or being accompanied or followed by security men. With great reluctance, they followed the instructions of the D.M. and Mr Sanjay Gandhi had left without the security van following him. This explains the absence of the security van when Mr Gandhi's jeep was alleged to have been fired upon.

The C.I.D. has not received corroborative evidence in support of the F.I.R. lodged by Mr Gulzari Lal Kalra, an outsider who was in charge of Mr Gandhi's campaign. Three persons, a sadhu, a tea stall holder and a chowkidar, who reside near the Munshiganj crossing, had stated that they had heard the purring of a jeep, its coming to a halt and three shots fired from some small arm. They are emphatic that there was only one jeep and they had neither heard nor seen any other jeep darting towards Sultanpur.

Mr Sanjay Gandhi could be questioned only briefly on the night of the incident by top intelligence officials when he stated that five shots were fired by the people who were sitting in the other jeep with their faces heavily covered by a towel-like cloth.

Mr Veer Bahadur Singh, Minister of State and General Secretary of the UPCC, who, according to the F.I.R., was also in the jeep has not been questioned by the C.I.D. so far. Mr Singh, however, when questioned by the Express correspondent corroborated the report as lodged with the police. When asked as to what happened to his own shadow, who was supposed to be with him, he said that he was left behind because there was no space in the jeep to accommodate another person.

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