

correlation between the wholesale and retail prices is more logical and rational.

12.00 hrs.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTION

**Ill-treatment of Sikh Pilgrims to Panja Sahib**

**S.N.Q. 21. Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath:**  
**Shri D. C. Sharma:**

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that hundreds of Sikhs on a pilgrimage to Panja Sahib on Baisakhi were ill-treated by Pakistani authorities;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether the issue has been taken up with the Government of Pakistan?

**The Minister of External Affairs (Shri Swaran Singh):** (a) to (c). 204 Sikh pilgrims visited Panja Sahib during Baisakhi 1966. Pakistan Government however placed a number of restrictions, viz;

- (i) unlike previous years they permitted the pilgrims to visit only Panja Sahib and not Lahore, Rawalpindi and Nankana Sahib;
- (ii) the pilgrim party was held up at Kasur for the whole of the day on the 11th April, 1966; and
- (iii) the movements of the pilgrim party at Panja Sahib were restricted to the Gurdwara only.

As a result of these difficulties and restrictions, the pilgrim party decided to return to India a day earlier than scheduled.

The efforts made by the Indian High Commission did not succeed in getting these restrictions and inconveniences removed.

**Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath:** Is it a fact that the Government of Pakistan had earlier assured all facilities and amenities to the Sikh pilgrims, and if so, is this not another instance in the mounting pile of evidence which affords cumulative and incontrovertible proof that the Government of Pakistan is hell-bent on wrecking the Tashkent Declaration and making of it a dead letter?

**Shri Swaran Singh:** I do not think that I can subscribe to the general proposition of linking this action on the part of the Pakistan Government with the Tashkent Declaration. This is a facility which has always been extended by the two countries for pilgrims visiting places of religious worship in either country, and the main thing that happened this year was that they conveyed their permission much too late. At one stage even the SGPC had said that as the permission had been received very late, they would not be even sending this party of pilgrims. It is obvious that the type of restrictions that they have placed, they placed for the first time. During the earlier years, their attitude towards these pilgrim parties was more liberal.

**Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath:** My question was specific. You will kindly permit me to repeat that question. In spite of the fact that in the previous years they were more liberal, this year even after the Tashkent Declaration, they have behaved so badly. That is why I said....

**Mr. Speaker:** He said he cannot link it with the Tashkent Declaration.

**Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath:** Let him not link it. We link it.

**Shri Nath Pai:** Better understanding is the objective of the Tashkent Declaration.

**Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath:** Are there reasons to believe that in the ranks of the great and valiant community of Sikhs in the Punjab there is or there was a group, albeit small, however very small, a group which has or

which had a soft corner, or, may I say, sneaking affection for the Government of Pakistan as opposed to the people of Pakistan, and if so, have they by now seen the truth about the Government of Pakistan, if not, has our Government helped them to do so?

**Shri Swaran Singh:** For one thing, this is not at all relevant to the present question. I would appeal to the hon. Member not to be taken in by the type of propaganda that Pakistan generally indulges in. They make these types of statements about several sections of the Indian community, and we should not really fall a victim to that subtle propaganda. I think that the entire Sikh community, as other communities of India, know their duty towards the country, and there should be absolutely no doubt of the slightest nature in that respect.

**Shri D. C. Sharma:** I was very unhappy that the Minister of External Affairs has soft-pedalled the whole thing, because I have been reading the statements made by those persons in which it has been said in unequivocal terms that these Sikh pilgrims were treated as prisoners of war and they were taken in the train, the shutters and windows of which were closed all the time, and they were not allowed to speak to anybody and to any national of Pakistan. May I know, in view of these things, whether the hon. Minister of External Affairs is justified in making that kind of statement and at what point he will get those complaints rectified that these pilgrims were not treated as honourable citizens of a great country like India by a neighbouring country which had signed only recently the Tashkent pact?

**Shri Swaran Singh:** I would share the unhappiness if it were directed not against my statement but against the treatment meted out to those pilgrims. I fail to understand how he describes my clear statement giving the precise manner in which these pilgrims were treated, as soft-peddling. He is a professor of English

and I do not know what he means....  
(*Interruption*).

**Shri D. C. Sharma:** He is soft-peddalling; not I.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order.

**Shri Swaran Singh:** The hon. Member is quite correct in that he has reminded me that I do not know English. In fact I was pleading that: that I do not know that much English. He is a professor of English.

**Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath:** He was.

**Shri Swaran Singh:** Once a professor, always a professor, like Prof. Hem Barua.

**Shri D. C. Sharma:** Once a District Court lawyer, always a District Court lawyer. (*Interruption*.)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order.

**Shri Swaran Singh:** I am proud to be a lawyer, and I want him to feel proud to be a professor. Why does he react when we say that he is a professor? There is no question of soft-peddling, with all the points that I have clearly mentioned. I would agree with him if he could put it in some more fiery language. I will bow before him.

**Shri Kapur Singh:** While avoiding altogether the net and snare which my hon. friend Shri Nath Pai spread before me by instigating me to say that some special words spoken by my hon. friend from Gurdaspur were incorrect English, I wish merely to draw the attention of the Minister of External Affairs to one aspect of the matter to which my hon. friend, the Member from Gurdaspur, has referred, namely, that the pilgrims were being taken through Pakistan in trains which were barred and shuttered and without any arrangement for ventilation thus creating a train virtually into a black hole; and, if so, may I know whether the Government are thinking or are proposing to lodge a strong protest with the Pakistan Government on this barbaric treatment?

**Shri Swaran Singh:** On this closing of the shutters of the railway carriages in which they were travelling, the information in my possession does not show that. But we have already left the Pakistan Government in no doubt about what we feel on the manner in which these pilgrims were treated. One officer was present in the pilgrims' party and he was in touch with the authorities. Their reply generally was "we are taking all the steps for security reasons."

**Shri Ranga:** He has not replied. So many representations to Pakistan were made. Have we received any reply?

**Shri Swaran Singh:** I have said already that our High Commission representatives were in touch with the authorities all the time.

**श्री हुकम चन्द कछवाय :** पाकिस्तान सरकार द्वारा जो यह दुर्व्यवहार किया गया सिक्खों के साथ यह बड़ी लज्जाजनक बात है। माननीय मंत्री ने अपने उत्तर में बतलाया कि भारत के हाई कमिश्नर ने कई प्रयत्न ऐसे किये हैं कि उन के साथ ऐसा व्यवहार न किया जाय तो मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि उन्होंने कौन कौन से ऐसे प्रयत्न किये, पाकिस्तान की सरकार से उन्होंने कौन कौन से बिरोध प्रकट किये और भारत सरकार ने उस सम्बन्ध में क्या कार्यवाही की ताकि यह जो दुर्घटना हुई वह लज्जाजनक बात भविष्य में न हो? ऐसी कौन सी कार्यवाही भारत सरकार ने की है ?

**श्री स्वर्ण सिंह :** मैं कह चुका हूँ। अब उस से ज्यादा मैं और नहीं कह सकता।

**श्री हुकम चन्द कछवाय :** हाई कमिश्नर ने कौन कौन सी कार्यवाही की ?

**अध्यक्ष महोदय :** वही तो बतलाया है। वही सब तो वह कहते रहे हैं।

**श्री बागड़ी :** अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं भी एक सवाल पूछना चाहता हूँ .....

**अध्यक्ष महोदय :** श्री हेम बरुमा।

**श्री बागड़ी :** पता नहीं हमारे बारे में क्या फर्क पड़ जाता है ?

**Shri Hem Barua:** In view of the fact that during the Pakistan aggression on our country, Pakistan said some very beautiful and laudatory things about the Sikh community, most of which the Sikh community deserves, in the context of this may I know whether our government have tried to find out from Pakistani sources the reason for this metamorphosis in Pakistan's attitude? Is it part of their grand plan to throw the Tashkent declaration into waste paper basket?

**Shri Swaran Singh:** I would like to inform the hon. Member that no one in Punjab is taken in by the type of propoganda in which Pakistan indulged in trying to show as if certain sections of the Sikh community are in any way inclined towards Pakistan in the manner in which the hon. Member is suggesting... (Interruptions). The way they treated this party of pilgrims in this very shabby manner is clear proof of the manner in which Pakistan regards the members of the Sikh community.

**Shri Hem Barua:** May I submit that Pakistan called the Sikh community, a community of brave people. It is a fact?

**Shri Swaran Singh:** I do not require a certificate from Pakistan or in fact from anybody to that effect.

#### WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

##### Development of Border Areas

\*1254. **Shri Shiv Charan Gupta:** Will the Minister of Planning and Social Welfare be pleased to state:

(a) the amount that has been spent on border areas during the Third Five Year Plan period; and

(b) the progress so far made regarding the link roads and civil development works?