

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH): (a) and (b). Necessary consultations between the Indian and Soviet Governments take place on a continuing basis with a view to strengthening Indo-Soviet relations in all fields.

Ceylonese Nationals residing in India

630. **SHRI D. B. CHANDRA GOWDA :**

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether recently the Government of Ceylon have decided to discontinue to treat the persons as Ceylon Nationals who are at present residing in India ; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government of India thereto ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Visit of G. D. R. Delegation

631. **SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM :** Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the German Democratic Republic Parliamentary Delegation visited India, went to Bangla Desh refugees camps and discussed with Government on the problems of common interest ; and

(b) their opinion on the developments in Bangla Desh ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The relevant extract from the statement made by the leader of the Delegation, Prof. R. Sieber, on 21st August is placed on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

Copy of Extract from the statement made by Prof. Dr. R. Sieber, leader of the three-Member delegation of the G. D. R.

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I must tell you that what we have been seen around Calcutta and in the border area, what we have heard in discussions is too much for me to express in mere words. The refugees' plight is so shocking, what was inflicted on them so abominable and the human misery and tragedy we have witnessed so great that we were stunned. It really needed efforts to take in what there was to see and to hear. But for this very purpose we had come there after all And it is clear to us now that we could not have assessed the situation as it is in reality had we not gone to the places where the refugees from East Bengal are settled temporarily and where an apparently never-ending stream of those unfortunate people is pouring into India day after day.

Our visit to the refugees' camps more than convinced us that India makes tremendous efforts to accommodate for the time being those men, women and children who had to flee their homes in East Bengal. It is also clear to us that this is a heavy burden on India's resources. The very fact that India could sustain the refugees so far and in such huge dimensions strengthens our faith in your nation's capabilities. We appreciate highly the great sacrifice made by your people to ease the plight of the refugees.

At the same time our visit to the refugees' camps made it very clear to us that this problem is a genuine international problem. India cannot consider herself the only country concerned. I can state that the Government of the German Democratic Republic shares the Government' of India's opinion that this situation increases international tension and that the problem can only be solved by peaceful political means. A permanent settlement on the basis of the principles and the declaration of human rights anchored in the UN charter which GDR underwrites must be reached.

The further influx of refugees into India must be stemmed and conditions must be created to make their early return in safety possible. This requires a permanent settlement of the basic political problem which can only be brought about in accordance with the will the people of East Bengal and in consultation with their elected representatives. We declare our sympathy and solidarity with the refugees and the staggering human problem that has arisen as the result of the military action in East Bengal.