

(6) The President's Emoluments and Pension of Parliament (Amendment) Bill, 1990

13.20 hrs.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTER

(7) The Salaries and Allowances of Officers of Parliament (Amendment) Bill, 1990

[English]

(I) Position of Indians in Kuwait

2. Sir, I also lay on the Table copies, duly authenticated by the Secretary-General of Rajya Sabha, of the following three Bills passed by the Houses of Parliament during the last session and assented to since a report was last made to the House on the 26th April, 1990:—

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K.GUJRAL): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a statement regarding position of Indians in Kuwait.

STATEMENT

From the very start of the current crisis, the safety and welfare of Indian nationals in Kuwait has been uppermost in our minds. There are about 172,000 Indian nationals there.

(1) The Gold (Control) Repeal Bill, 1990

(2) The Constitution (Sixty-fifth Amendment) Bill, 1990

(3) The Constitution (Sixty-sixth Amendment) Bill, 1990

2. On 2 August, 1990, the day on which the military action commenced, we had issued instructions to our Ambassador to evolve appropriate mechanism to get in touch with all members of Indian community there through the various Indian associations as well as through groups and individuals. Since then, our Ambassador has been closely in touch with the members of the Indian community and according to his latest reports there have been no confirmed casualties among them. There are, however, unconfirmed reports that 5-6 Indian nationals were admitted to hospital after being caught in crossfire. We are seeking further information about this.

[Translation]

(Interruptions)

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT (Nagpur): A lot atrocities are being committed on the poor labourers in Nagpur city. They had come there from Orissa as a contract labour where they are being exploited. Recently they were subjected to indiscriminal police firing which had left two of them dead and 25 injured. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to why these contract labourers are being subject to such exploitation and atrocities at a time when bonded labour system has been abolished in the entire country. Will the hon. Minister get the entire matter investigated by a high level committee? (Interruptions)

3. Government has also requested that Iraqi authorities through our Ambassador in Baghdad to ensure that appropriate instructions are sent to the troops to extend protection to Indian nationals in Kuwait and we have been assured by the Iraqi authorities that such instructions had been sent. We have also been assured by the Iraqi authorities yesterday afternoon that the position has been checked and that there has been no casualty of Indian nationals. However, attempts are being made to reconfirm this through our Ambassador in Kuwait. During the last 3 days, communication lines be-

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: The Home Minister.

tween India and Kuwait have been inoperative. All efforts are being made to restore the communication links.

4. A Special Cell has been opened in the Ministry of External Affairs to receive enquiries regarding the welfare of Indian nationals in Kuwait from their relatives and friends. We have already received several hundred such enquiries and attempts are being made to convey them to our Ambassador in Kuwait via Baghdad so that he can establish contact with the persons concerned and reassure us of their safety. Several of the enquiries related to Indian nationals on the British Airways flight which landed in Kuwait shortly before the airport was closed and from which the passengers and crew were off-loaded. According to latest information from Iraqi authorities, the passengers and crew have been lodged in a hotel in Kuwait pending resumption of flights which will enable them to leave. British Airways conveyed to us yesterday afternoon that the passengers have been taken by road from Kuwait to Baghdad. We have asked our Ambassador in Baghdad to check on this.

5. I am assure the House that the Government is doing everything possible to ensure the safety and welfare of Indians in Kuwait. The anxiety and concern of their kith and kin in India is naturally shared by all of us in the House.

(II) Development in Pakistan

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a statement regarding developments in Pakistan. (*Interruptions*)

STATEMENT

As the Honourable Members are aware, the President of Pakistan has dissolved the National Assembly and dismissed the duly elected Government of Pakistan headed by Mohterama Benazir Bhutto. This came as a surprise to us, particularly when there was no indication that she had lost her majority in the National Assembly. A Caretaker Prime

Minister has been sworn in. Provincial Assembly have also been dissolved and Caretaker Chief Ministers appointed. A state of emergency has been declared. We have noted the announcement that fresh elections will be held in October, 1990.

Developments in Pakistan are the internal affairs of that country. However, experience shows that shocks of this nature anywhere put democracy under severe strain. We sincerely hope that there will be no discontinuity or setback to the democratic process in Pakistan and that peoples' will would prevail.

We have nothing but good will for the people of Pakistan. We also support a stable Pakistan. We have always worked towards building a relationship of cooperation and good-neighborliness with this country. Our efforts have continued despite severe provocations from Pakistan, including support for terrorism and subversion directed against India. We believe that a friendly, constructive and cooperative relationship will not only benefit the peoples of our two countries, but will also contribute to peace and stability in the region.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned for Lunch to meet at 2.20 p.m.

13.21 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned for Lunch till twenty minutes past Fourteen of the Clock

14.25 hrs.

The Lok Sabha re-assembled after Lunch at twenty five minutes past Fourteen of the Clock

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]