

Government brought 854 ladies with 85 children from red light area in Bombay to Madras in Mukthi Express.

Did they get the real "Mukthi" from their horrible life? First the Elisa test proved that 2/3 of them are victims of AIDs. Then the Western Blot test corrected it. But, their relatives are not ready to accept them. How can the State Government rehabilitate them? We have to think about that also when we talk about the atrocities on women.

Even in police department the position of women is not safe and that has been discussed in this House. So, I am leaving that point. Police Officers sometime come before us as criminals. I am not touching that point.

When we talk about the atrocities on women, we are not discussing atrocities on Harijans or atrocities on Brahmins, but it is the discussion about atrocities on womanhood as whole. I have only one question to pose to this House, through you Sir. When will this fire be 'out' or better quote the title of Shri Suni Dutt, M.P.'s picture on atrocities on women "Yeh Aag Kub Bujhegi".

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think the hon. Minister will require half an hours' time. I think you can do it next time. There are one or two Members also who want to speak. I will see how it can be done. The Minister of External Affairs is here. Other hon. Members are also keen to listen to him. Now, the Minister of External Affairs.

16.02 hrs.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

**Visit of Minister of External Affairs to
Moscow Washington, Amman,
Baghdad and Kuwait In the Context of
Gulf Crisis.**

[English]

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): As the august

House is aware, I have been on a tour of some of the major countries concerned with the present Gulf crisis during the last seven days. I would like to take this first available opportunity to give a detailed report to the House regarding the highlights of this tour which took me first to Moscow, then to Washington followed by visits to Amman, Baghdad and Kuwait in that order. As Honourable Members are aware. My colleague, the Minister of Civil Aviation Shri Arif Mohammed Khan has also just recently visited several Gulf countries to see for himself the condition of Indians there, to make arrangements on the spot for the repatriation of distress cases and to persuade the Governments of those countries to make available to us additional oil supplies. I am sure the House would like to express its appreciation of the effort that he has made and commend him for the success of that effort.

The primary reason of the tour was our deep concern for the welfare, security and well-being of the large Indian community that lives and works in Kuwait and elsewhere in the Gulf. We have approximately 172,000 Indians in Kuwait, and in the Gulf as a whole about 1-2 million altogether.

I spent nearly 2 days in Kuwait and used this opportunity to meet as wide a cross section of the Indian community as possible. I went to their school and to their residential areas, held two meetings at the Embassy which were attended by thousands of our people, and another two meetings at their residential areas, again attended by several thousands in each case. I spoke to individuals and groups where they lived and elsewhere. Their enthusiasm was tremendous. Several times during my address, slogans of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" were shouted, and they greeted me with applause and warmth. There is naturally considerable anxiety about the future and a great deal of tension at present. However, visiting several places in Kuwait, I could see for myself that while the law and order situation is not normal there is no cause for grave anxiety. There are looting in some cases including the property of a few Indian nationals as but

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sever punitive steps have been taken by the authorities and this problem has by and large been brought under control. Electricity, water and essential services are functioning normally. Medical services are available for emergencies. Closure of banks has been a problem, but one bank opened the day I arrived and other banks are expected to open in the next few days, so that people are able to draw cash for their needs. There is no doubt that in Kuwait, shortages of food have appeared making rationing inevitable almost all shops are closed, but some cooperative stores selling essential goods and food items are open. But the Indians I spoke to and the leaders of associations informed me that while a number of items are not available, and most shops are closed, basic rations are available for the time being. Common kitchens have been set up for those among the Indian community who are most needy and over 6,000 persons are being regularly fed at these kitchens. I conveyed to the leaders and all those whom I met that their families and friends were anxious to receive news about them—that they should write letters and given them to me to carry back to India. Thus I brought 15 large sacks full of letters back with me for posting.

I should mention the excellent work done by our Ambassador in Kuwait and the officers and staff of the Embassy who have undergone great hardship at this time of tension and daily difficulty and have nevertheless worked around the clock to ensure that the welfare and needs of the Indian community are met by whatever means are available during the period of shortages. I myself have been the unprecedented crowds that gather daily at the Embassy, people who are in need of travel or other documents seek advice on what to do or ask for arrangements for repatriation. The Embassy has, with limited staff in such an emergency, coped extremely well in handling the situation. Our Ambassador in Baghdad and the Embassy there are similarly to be highly commended for, the current repatriation route is by land through which hundreds of India

nationals arrive in Baghdad each day; they have to be fed looked after and arrangements made for adequate transport. The Ambassador and his staff have devoted themselves entirely this task on a round the clock basis despite several impediment regarding non-availability of accommodation and transport.

The future of our Embassy in Kuwait was discussed with the authorities. Iraq has decided that no Embasys will be allowed to continue after 24-8-90. There is little option for the Mission located in Kuwait, but to comply with this decision. Both in order to look after the welfare of the Indian community more effectively and facilitate repatriation, for which Basrah is likely to be the most used route, we are taking measures to strengthen our Consulate General there. I am confident that this arrangement will work satisfactorily. We are also taking steps to improve our communications with the Consulate General in Basrah to facilitate this work.

The authorities in Kuwait have been courteous and considerate to Indian nationals, and there have been no serious complaints on this account. I have however with deepest regret to inform the august House that in the cross fire on 2nd August two Indian nationals lost their lives. I am sure that the House would join me in conveying to their families our deepest condolences and sympathy. We have also decided to pay Rs. 25,000 as grant to each family, and are taking up the issue of their dues with the employees. There was a report of another India national who died but this has not so far been confirmed. Apart from this, another Indian national was seriously injured; there are a few other reports of minor injuries. We had received reports regarding Indians missing or detained by the Iraqi authorities. I took all this up during my discussions and was assured that there were presently no detained Indian nationals. Nevertheless, on my request, the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister & Foreign Minister agreed that specific instructions would be issued to the concerned Iraqi authorities to verify if any Indian national had

been detained through mistaken identity, and that they would be released immediately. 507 Indians were detained on the first day, that is 2nd August. They have since been released and have left Baghdad for Amman by air, for India. Some other specific cases were brought to my attention. The crew of an Air Indian flight had been stranded in Kuwait. I am glad to inform the House that they have since been repatriated. Indian nationals on board a British Airways flight transiting Kuwait were also stranded. Some of the ladies and children were brought back by me in the special aircraft in which I travelled. Arrangements are being made for the repatriation of the others.

Here, I must commend the Indian association leaders and other community volunteers in Kuwait who have put in a great deal of hard work and effort to ensure that during difficult times for the Indian community, they are looked after, their recruitments of welfare met and they are fed. Many of the more prosperous Indians are feeding hundreds of the more needy at their homes daily; they are sharing what they have for the benefit of the community as a whole. I congratulate them and assure them that the people and the Government of India appreciate the services they have rendered to such a large Indian community. I am confident that this House would agree that the contribution being made by them are in accordance with our highest traditions.

I informed the Indian community that while those who need to leave owing to genuine distress medical assistance or other humanitarian grounds may do so, we do not see any reason for haste or panic in leaving Kuwait. Our people have done well there they have contributed to the development of the nation and the present circumstances though difficult should not be a case for panic or hasty departure. I advised the leaders and members of the Indian community to further strengthen the voluntary organisations that have so far done extremely well in keeping up the morale and rendering service to the community. They were asked to decide among themselves what should be

the priority in regard to repatriation. At the same time, I assured them that we were closely watching the situation; we had made arrangements for repatriation of Indian nationals on a regular basis and we would gradually step up the numbers who could be repatriated. On these points I had detailed discussions with the local authorities in Kuwait who agreed to provide all facilities for the Indian community. In fact they urged that Indian community should stay on and continue to contribute to the economy. I myself brought back with me 200 of our nationals, including a few expectant mothers, other women, children and distress cases in the Air Force aircraft in which I returned. The conditions of travel were exacting, but the demand was such that I felt obliged to help out to the extent possible. I would like to thank the Captain and crew of the aircraft for the great help they gave during the flight.

The present route for repatriation is very inconvenient. It is by road from Kuwait to Baghdad and then to Amman from where Air India picks them up. In the present situation the journey takes 48 hours or more; it is hazardous and exhausting; it is not suitable for women and children or the elderly. We have, therefore, arranged with the approval of the Iraqi Government that an Iraqi aircraft will be chartered from Basrah which is close to Kuwait to take Indian nationals to Amman from where Air India will pick them up. Presently it is planned to start with one flight per day, but this can be increased later according to the requirements. The Iraqi authorities are also processing our proposal for direct flights from Baghdad or Basrah to India and we hope this will be finalized in a short time. It has also been agreed that passenger ships might be used, but this is dependent on the present state of interdiction policies and we are seeking further clarifications on this point. We are, in any case, setting up offices on both sides of the Iraq-Jordan border to facilitate passage by the land route. Two officials have already been posted on the Jordan side and two more are being posted on the Iraq side. Steps have also been taken for adequate reception at Bombay and Trivandrum and for facilitating onward journey for

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which the Minister of Railways has agreed to provide free tickets. One ship owned by non-resident Indians, M.V, Safir has been in Kuwait since the crisis began. During my discussion it was agreed that the ship and its crew will be released. Efforts are also being made to see whether some members of the Indian community can be repatriated on board this vessel as well.

Another point discussed with the Government of Iraq was regarding the supply of food to the Indian community. I mentioned to President Saddam Hussain, the shortages and rationing faced by them and it has been agreed that whatever can be done within the existing circumstances will be done. What is needed is to improve the availability and I will come to that presently.

During my discussions with President Saddam Hussein, Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz and other Iraqi leaders, I brought to their attention the numerous problems faced by the Indian community in Kuwait. I stated that they needed assistance by way of additional facilities for travel by road or air, provision of necessary documentation, enforcement of law and order in the areas in which they live, medical aid etc. They promised to make ever effort to solve these problems. I would like to express my gratitude particularly, to President Saddam Hussein and to the Iraqi authorities for all the help that is being rendered to the Indian community.

The question of interdiction was discussed with the Secretary of State, Baker in Washington, and I was informed that food supplies for humanitarian purposes as also medical supplies going by sea will not be stopped. We have, however to see whether it is going to be really possible.

An important question discussed by me particularly in Moscow and Washington was the question of oil supplies at a reasonable price. As the House is aware over 40% of our oil imports including supplies from the Soviet Union, originated in Iraq or Kuwait. The

responses that I got during my discussions both in Moscow and Washington were generally encouraging. Mr. Baker told me that the US supported the proposal for an increase of production of Gulf producers and others so that the overall shortfall and its adverse effects on prices and availability, could be minimized. The Soviet Government immediately agreed that they would seek alternative source for the supplies of oil which had hitherto originated in Iraq and said they would welcome a delegation from India to work out the details immediately; they also offered oil of Soviet origin, an offer which would be examined to see if this can be availed of by India.

There is also the overall question of the adverse effects on the economies of countries like India of the current developments in the Gulf, particularly of the application of the mandatory sanctions imposed by the Security Council. So far as the mandatory sanctions themselves are concerned, India would naturally keep step with the world community. However, in the present inter-dependent world severe or draconian measures applied in any part of the world cannot but have adverse effects the rest of the world. The UN Charter had visualized this problem, though not to be extent that it is present today, and had provided for recourse to the Security Council with regard to the solution of any special problems that may arise. In my discussions in Moscow, the Soviet Government agreed that this was a matter on which joint efforts are needed at the international level to ease the burden on countries like India which are diversely affected. The subject was also discussed in Washington where I was told that the US also believed that there must be international cooperation to ease the burden on countries like India which were most adversely affected. We have already commenced consultations in New York with several countries similarly affected, to explore the possibility of taking action through the UN.

I now come to the situation in the Gulf in general. This was discussed at length in all the capitals I visited. There are problems

which must be of priority concern for India such as the future of the Indian community, oil supplies and prices and the burden of sanctions. At the same time. We have also to think the of possibility that exists for the de-escalation of the crisis before it engulfs the whole world. Any measure for de-escalation will be in keeping with the general trend of recent years towards global detente and strengthening of peace.

We in India are equally concerned about the destabilizing effect of this crisis for our region. The Gulf region is a neighbour of South Asia. Escalation of tension or conflict there will have serious repercussions on us. We have already seen that Pakistan and Bangladesh have decided to send troops to the area of tension in the Gulf. This could very well be used as an excuse for further militarization of these countries thus posing a threat to the security of the whole region. This makes it incumbent upon all of us to look for openings for de-escalation and defusion of tension.

Here, I am not proposing that we assume a mediatory or good offices role. I made this clear to all the leaders met. Nevertheless, one of the objectives of the discussions was to find whether there was any chance of reversing the on-going escalation. This can only be explored tentatively at this stage. Though my discussions during the tour did not reveal much of a meeting ground. It is imperative that efforts to this end continue.

Clearly, humanitarian considerations are uppermost in our mind because of the large Indian community in the whole region; there are however, nationalities of other countries too including Iraq and Kuwait who are adversely affected by the food shortages and other circumstances. As I already stated there is agreement among all concerned that food supplies for humanitarian purposes can be sent. However in the context of the present interdiction policy, we do not know whether it is really going to work. We are considering the possibility of sending a ship load of food from India to alleviate the suffer-

ing of the people of all nationalities caught in the current crisis. It would also be a good idea to explore whether the Red Crescent or Red Cross Societies could play a role regarding the welfare of the foreign nationals in Iraq and Kuwait.

Finally I would like to take advantage of this occasion to restate our position on some of the major aspects of Gulf crisis. Immediately after the onset of the crisis, we expressed our regret that the differences between Iraq and Kuwait could not be settled peacefully and stated our well-known position against the use of force in any form in inter-State relations and called for the soonest possible withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. At the same time, we have expressed our disapproval of unilateral action outside the framework of United Nations by any country or group of countries to enforce the mandatory sanctions decided by the Security Council. We are also against the induction or presence of foreign military forces in this region.

It is our hope that the escalation that has taken place in the last three weeks in the Gulf will in the coming days, be reversed and the international community will see the wisdom of making a determined effort to defuse the tension and restore peace and stability in the region. Both the Arab League and the Non-aligned Movement have an important role in this regard.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN (Mavelikara): Sir, this subject is of concern to all the sections of the House and a number of clarifications are required. Hence, I suggest that a discussion under rule 193 should take place, provided the Government have no objection.

SHRI I.K. Gujral: Sir, it is for you and the Business Advisory Committee to decide.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI SATYA PAL MALIK): Sir we are not averse to the discussion.

[Sh. Satya Pal Malik]

[*Translation*]

Keeping in view the situation I want to say that no Bill is being passed and no business is being transacted. (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think the hon. Minister has made a detailed statement. There are many points involved in it. I have received slips from many Members who would like to speak and it appears there would be many questions. It may not be possible for us to cover all the areas which are mentioned in the statement today. So, we can fix it tomorrow. We can have a detailed discussion on this statement. All hon. Members who want clarifications to their questions would be welcome to do so tomorrow. It will be in the interests of the hon. Members also. The statement is quite detailed and you would like to weigh and assess each and every point that is made there and you would like to ask very pointed and pertinent questions. It takes it that it is the consensus of the House that we take up for discussion tomorrow and clarificatory questions can be asked immediately. May I request the hon. Members that in view of the fact that you are all interested in discussing this issue, tomorrow's discussion which is not mentioned in the rules, may be very very brief or it may not be there also!

SHRI AJIT PANJA (Calcutta North East): Will copies of the statement be circulated?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: I have in the meantime received a report just now that the land route from Baghdad to Amman has been closed because of some epidemic there. Hence urgent arrangements are being made to fly people from Basrah and Baghdad to Amman direct.

SHRI YADVENDRA DATT (Jaunpur): I just want to make one request through you to

the hon. Minister. This is very important issue involving so many things. So, I hope the hon. Minister will agree to have a discussion in the matter.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: He has already agreed. It is already agreed that we are going to have a discussion tomorrow. We are not going to have the discussion on small points immediately after the question hour tomorrow. Let us wait for tomorrow. We will have enough time for it. Mr. Eduardo Faleiro, do you want to say anything?

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO (Mormugao): I just wanted to make a couple of points.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Not now. Tomorrow you can make.

SHRI V. VIJAYARAGHAVAN (Palghat): The Government of Kerala has sent their Minister to the Gulf. He is waiting in Bahrain. My request to the External Affairs Minister is to contact the Iraqi authorities and to make necessary arrangements for the visit of Kerala Minister to Kuwait.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You can make the point tomorrow. Now, we will take Prasar Bharati Broadcasting Bill.

SHRIMATI J. JAMUNA (Rajahmundry): What about the discussion on Atrocities on Women?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have said that you will get the opportunity.

16.29 hrs.

PRASAR BHARATI (BROADCASTING CORPORATION OF INDIA) BILL—
CONTD

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now we will take up Prasar Bharati Bill motion for consid-