

(a) the details of major and medium irrigation projects proposed to be executed in Rajasthan during the Eighth Five Year Plan; and

(b) the amount of investment involved therein?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES AND MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI MANUBHAI KOTADIA): (a) and (b). The Eighth Five Year Plan has not been finalised.

Complaints Against the Indian Embassy Officials in Iraq

*96. PROF. P.J. KURIEN:
SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received any complaints against the Indian Embassy officials in Iraq and elsewhere regarding their treatment with the Indians trapped there; and

(b) if so, the facts thereof and the action, if any, taken in this regard?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR): (a) and (b). Our Embassies in Kuwait, Iraq and Jordan handled the movement and looked after the welfare of over 140,000 Indians moving from Kuwait and Iraq to Jordan. This evacuation was arranged and completed within a short period of less than two months. Our officials had to work round the clock to cope with the task they faced.

But for some problems in the initial stage of the evacuation which was unplanned, the manner in which our Embassies looked after these Indian nationals and assisted in their evacuation has come in for

wide commendation both by those who returned as well as by international organisations operating in that region. A few complaints received were immediately brought to the attention of the Missions concerned with a view to taking remedial action.

Initiatives to Solve Sri Lankan Ethnic Problem

*97. SHRI GOPI NATH GAJAPATHI:
SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any fresh initiatives have been taken by the Union Government to solve the ethnic problem of Tamilians in Sri Lanka;

(b) whether he visited Sri Lanka recently in this connection;

(c) if so, the outcome of the talks held by him with the leaders of Sri Lanka;

(d) whether the Government have drawn up any plan to improve Indo-Sri Lanka relations; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR): (a) The ethnic problem in Sri Lanka is ultimately a matter to be settled between the Sri Lanka Government & the Tamils. Government have again conveyed to the Sri Lanka Government that only a negotiated political settlement which takes into account legitimate Tamil demands can lead to a lasting solution of the ethnic problem.

(b) and (c). The visit of former External Affairs Minister to Sri Lanka, while providing

us an opportunity to exchange views on the ethnic issue in Sri Lanka, also underlined our desire to develop all round bilateral relations, particularly in economic, trade and cultural fields. We reaffirmed our belief that the political framework created by Sri Lanka following the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of 1987, provides a viable basis for a reasonable and enduring settlement of the ethnic issue. We also stressed the need to pursue measures to bring the parties concerned to the negotiating table. During the visit it was decided that steps will be taken for the establishment of an Indo-Sri Lanka Joint Commission chaired by the respective Foreign Ministers. It was also agreed that Oil and Natural Gas Commission and Ceylon Petroleum Corporation will take steps towards finalising a contract for oil exploration in the Gulf of Mannar.

(d) and (e). It has always been Government's policy to have friendly and close bilateral relations with Sri Lanka. The visit of the then External Affairs Minister to Sri Lanka served to further consolidate and strengthen Indo-Sri Lanka relations.

Indians Killed/Injured in the Gulf War

*98. SHRI B. N. REDDY:
SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKARA MURTHY:

Will the Minister of EXTERN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of Indians are reported to have been killed/injured in the recent Gulf war; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the relief given to the dependents of their family members?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government have confirmed report of death of Shri Shyam Lal and injury to 5 other Indians namely:

1. Shri Ajit Singh
2. Shri Lakhbir Singh
3. Shri Jit Singh
4. Shri Kalyan Bose
5. Shri Kasim Khan Basheer Ahmed

Action is underway to provide relief.

Curtailment of DTC Bus Services

*99. SHRI Y. S. RAJASEKHAR REDDY:
SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Delhi Transport Corporation have curtailed its bus services in order to save fuel in view of the Gulf war;

(b) if so, the number of buses withdrawn from service, depot-wise and total quantity of diesel saved as a result thereof;

(c) the number of trips and commuters carried by each DTC bus after the outbreak of the Gulf War and how does it compare with the corresponding period last year; and

(d) the steps taken to remove the inconvenience caused to the commuters due to the curtailment of bus services?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES AND MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI MANUBHAI KOTADIA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.