

17.31 hrs.

HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION

**Influx of Refugees from
East Bengal**

MR. CHAIRMAN : House will now take up the half-hour discussion. Mr. Samar Guha.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA (Contai) : Sir, when I rise to speak today, the faces of those emaciated skeletons who have crossed into Indian territory from Bangla Desh flash into my mind's eye.

17.32 hrs.

[Shri Sezhyan *in the Chair*]

They are the people who have lost their near and dear ones.

SHRI P. K. DEO (Kalahandi) : This is a very important discussion. The Minister of Rehabilitation should be present.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Gwalior) : Where is Mr. Khadiikar ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA) : He is busy with some important piece of work.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Nothing is more important than parliamentary work. The other day when we were discussing this question, Mr. Khadiikar was at Geneva. Now he is in the capital. He must be present. I do not mean any disrespect to Shri Balgovind Verma. He is a new Minister trying to come up. But what has happened to Mr. Khadiikar ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : We require a Minister to be here to reply to the debate and he is here. But the sentiments of the House should be conveyed to the Minister.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : I was saying, many of them have lost their near and dear ones in Bangla Desh. Many parents have lost their sons and daughters. Many sons and daughters have lost their parents. Many mothers and sisters—hundreds and

thousands of them—have not only been dishonoured, but thousands of them have been kidnapped and kept inside the cantonments and garrisons of the Pakistani army. Human history has perhaps no parallel to such a Titanic tragedy of uprooted humanity, millions of uprooted humanity, who face a terrible situation of total destitution, utter despair and boundless misery.

Yesterday Shri Khadiikar quoted the figure of the Bangladesh refugees as 5.7 million. But that figure is wrong. Because, according to the statement issued by the Chief Minister of West Bengal, the figures are West Bengal 45.6 lakhs, Tripura 9.4 lakhs, Meghalaya 3.4 lakhs and Assam 8 lakhs. This is not my statement but the statement issued by the Chief Minister. If you total all these it is near about 7 million and this is the figures as on 11th June. Now it has already crossed the 7 million mark. According to Rev. Blum, an international gentleman, Director of 'War on want' who visited almost all the borders, the figures has already touched the mark of 10 million.

These people who have come from Bangladesh, they have not come as a result of natural calamity. They have come to seek shelter and protection in Indian territory as a result of most brutal butchery, as a result of the conspiracy of the Government of Pakistan. It is a conspiracy of the Government of Pakistan not only to kill them, not only to butcher them, not only to commit genocide on the people of Bangladesh, but to push them out of the territory, into the Indian soil, to subvert our own security, to shatter our economy, to create dislocation in our socio-economic matrix, to create communal tension here and to create a colossal problem for our own country.

These 7 million refugees from Bangladesh who have come to India have not come of their own. They have been forced to enter into India as a result of the sordid conspiracy of a foreign government. What is this ? Is it not aggression in disguise by Pakistan ? If that is so, I want to remind the Government, by human touch alone, by giving them shelter and protection, you cannot resolve the problem of the Bangladesh refugees. Humanitarian touch may be essential to give them temporary shelter, but the political problem, which is the root

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cause of uprooting millions of humanity, has to be faced with firm political determination and political action.

It was very nice yesterday to hear the Prime Minister say that we will go through hell to meet the situation in Bangladesh. She also rose very high when she said that she will not accept any political solution which will mean the death for Bangladesh. Very nice words, very encouraging words ; but words do not mean anything unless followed by positive, firm and determined action. I want to know from the Government whether they can convince the people of India that this government, after the outbreak of national revolution in Bangladesh, have taken any positive action to stop the butchery of the people, to stop the worst kind of genocide that has been perpetrated on 7½ million people in Bangladesh, a thing that has never happened in any part of the world. What has happened to this government, a government which represents 55 crores of people, a government which represents a nation which is the second biggest in the world ? I do not know what has happened to this government. What is this, if it is not emasculation of the whole national being, the sole of which has been entrusted to you ?

I do not want to dilate much on the subject. I should only want to remind you that the responsibility had been left to the Deputy Minister by Shri Khadilkar. If this Government had any sense of responsibility, Shri Khadilkar, who is responsible for dealing with the refugee problem, when his presence in India was necessary every hour, would not have gone on a foreign tour and remain there for nearly two weeks. Even when such an important discussion is being held in this House, he is not present here. He has left the responsibility to the Deputy Minister.

What did the Deputy Minister do ? He made a naive statement, something like an astrological forecast. He said that they will be required to keep the Bangla Desh refugees only for six months. What is the basis of his calculation ? How does he say that they will keep these refugees only for six months ? Have they anything in mind, any positive programme or line of action ? Have they taken any decision or positive

steps on the basis of which they make this calculation ? It is like an astrological forecast, I do not blame him. He may be a good soul but he made a naive statement, perhaps because he is a newcomer.

Shri Khadilkar should be sacked and relieved from the responsibility of this Ministry. He has not even gone to the border except once. On Saturday, the 23rd May evening he flew to Calcutta and came back on the 24th May when Parliament opened, only for a few hours. After that, when people from the whole world are coming, this Rehabilitation Minister has not visited West Bengal, Tripura or any part of that area. Not even the Deputy Minister, none of the important Ministers has visited these refugee areas. This is the attitude.

SHRI K. N. TIWARY (Bettiah) : The Prime Minister went.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Yes.

When you said that you would be required to keep the refugees only for six months, do you remember what taunting remark was made by the Speaker himself ? The speaker said, "Do you really believe that they will go back ?" It was a spontaneous reaction of the Speaker. The Speaker reflected the opinion of the people at large in our country and of all State Governments, because you have words, words and words—brave words, nice words, decent words, courageous words, words of confidence, but without an iota of positive action.

That is the reason why you have not been able to create any confidence either in the mind of Bangla Desh refugees or of any State Government or of the people of India that you really mean action and that these refugees will go back to Bangla Desh, their homeland. That is why the State Governments are reluctant to take these Bangla Desh refugees. Even after the Nehru-Liaquat Pact in 1950 Nehru had harboured the idea that after that Pact the refugees would go back. But after 1956 he was completely disillusioned when not a single soul of a refugee went back on the assurance of Liaquat Ali. You can have an assurance but these assurances will have no meaning unless you take some positive action.

I will draw your attention to what the Meghalaya Government has done. It is the greatest disservice to the nation that they have done when the UNO team was visiting the Bangla Desh refugees. They have maltreated men and women. Refugees are treated as prisoners. 6,000, Bangla Desh refugees have been forced to go back to Sunamganj-Sylhet area out of sheer frustration. They said when they went back, "We are being killed here; we will be killed there; let us be killed in our own homeland." The Prime Minister went to visit Meghalaya. What is her report of the condition in Meghalaya? You must enlighten this House about the condition there.

If you are really serious about sending the Bangla Desh refugees back to their homeland, I suggest that it is absolutely wrong to take them to different States. They should be kept in West Bengal, Tripura, Assam and Meghalaya. I remind you that at the time of partition almost all refugees from West Pakistan were given temporary shelter in East Punjab in Government camps. It can be done in West Bengal and in all the border States. But the question is one of finance, management and supply. If finance, management and supply can be assured by the Central Government, camps can be built in the interior areas of the border States. Why I say so? You must keep the Bangla Desh spirit amongst the refugees alive. Unless you keep the Bangla Desh spirit alive, it will not be possible for you, even after a radical change in the situation of Bangla Desh, to send them back. It will be wrong to send them outside the border State. The Government should undertake the responsibility of financing and giving them supplies. These refugees can be put in the interior area of the border State.

The Chief Minister of West Bengal has made a statement that they have not been able to provide shelter to about 25 lakhs of refugees. They have only sky above them, some water to drink but no food. At the same time, the Minister says that those who are not in the camps will not be provided with ration. What a contradiction? You have not been able to give them shelter. You have not been able to set up camps. At the same time, you are denying them the ration. What a terrible thing? What an inhuman thing! You can imagine that. You have admitted that 30 per cent of the refugees have not been provided any shelter either in the camps or any kind of im-

proved shelter. I demand that the ration be given to all, whether they are in camps or with their relatives or under the shade of trees or in the open with only sky above. Equal treatment should be given to all of them.

What is this ration that is given? It is only 400 grams of rice, 100 grams of dal, a few pieces of onions and potatoes. It is not a fact that all these people have left everything behind in Bangla Desh? When they were coming here, even the last vestiges of their belongings were snatched away. They have come here only with bare skeleton. They have nothing with them. How will they cook? From where will they get utensils? From where will they get oil, fuel and all that? They have no clothings, no beddings, etc. The Government has not given them anything. I say, some cash allowance should be given to them so that they can purchase some clothings, beddings, etc.

About the management, and I do not know how many young men and women are there, the Government lacks imagination. Most of them are young men and women who have come from Bangla Desh. Their the largest number because their lives are in danger in Bangla Desh. Why have they not been recruited? Why don't you give them an opportunity to manage their own community kitchens, look after the sanitation and other things? It is to keep the spirit of Bangla Desh alive in them. Why have you not done that? You should do that. Also, in all the camps, you should keep at least one leader a revolutionary, of the Bangla Desh so that they can keep up the spirit of Bangla Desh in them.

I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to another point. The international help should be given not in cash but in kind. You know the reasons. The priority should be given for supplies of tents, tarpaulins, land and air transports, ambulance cars, tube-well equipment, dry foods, baby foods, milk powder, medicines, etc.

Lastly, I would like to say that Mr. Khadilkar by his sense of lack of responsibility has amply proved that the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Labour and Employment should be separated immediately. If the Government really wants to tackle this gigantic problem, unprecedented problem, of

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the refugees, immediately, a separate Ministry for Rehabilitation for dealing with refugees should be set up. They should set up immediately an office at Calcutta with either Minister of State or Deputy Minister who can take spot decisions.

It is a matter of shame for us that, when a delegation from U.K. is visiting Bangla Desh, and they will be coming to our country, the Government has not sponsored any delegation of the Members of Parliament to go to the border area to see things with their own eyes. I demand that the Government should immediately organise a delegation of Members of Parliament to go along with the border area to see things with their own eyes and help the Government in tackling this gigantic problem.

Lastly, I want that if the Government do not want to behave in a partisan way—it is a national problem and so long the Opposition has treated it as a national problem—and if the Government do not want to deal with the whole matter in a partisan way, they should immediately set up a Refugees Council with the members of the Government Party as well as the Opposition and presided over by the Minister of Rehabilitation. Only then it will mean that the Government want a national policy and a national approach to the national crisis that we are facing to-day.

Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri P. K. Deo to put a question.

SHRI P. K. DEO (Kalahandi) : Sir, human history has never witnessed a refugee influx of this magnitude and as stated by the previous speaker refugees have come and they are more than seven million and in their train, they have brought in misery, diseases and so many problems. Now I would like to put a categorical question to the Minister. What is the solution to this refugee problem? We are completely fed up with the sabre-rattling statements of the Government. It was only yesterday that the Prime Minister has stated in the Rajya Sabha that the Government is prepared to meet any contingency to solve the refugee problem. But we would like to have a categorical answer from the Minister. What

is the solution they are thinking of to this refugee problem? If they are going to send them back, are you capable of creating conditions in Bangla Desh so that they can go back? And if they are to go back, then why try to disperse the refugees to some other areas where they may create problems? The problem of law and order is already there. Health hazards are there. There are so many saboteurs who have come there and they have not been properly screened and all these things have to be taken into consideration. If the Government is going to have a show-down as the ultimate thing, then why not expedite it? Why prolong this agony and try to disperse these refugees to other States where there is a possibility of creating problems there?

Taking all these factors into consideration, I would request the Minister to come out with a categorical statement as to how they want to solve this problem of refugees and what is the time limit fixed?

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी (ग्वालियर) : सभापति जी, अच्छा होता यदि श्री खाडिलकर महोदय सदन में आते। हम उनसे यह भी पूछते कि अपनी विदेश यात्रा में बंगला देश के बारे में विश्व जनमत जाग्रत करने में उनको कितनी सफलता मिली है। ऐसा लगता है कि अपने देश में अपने से सम्बन्धित समस्याओं के बारे में निर्णय करने के बजाय हम विदेशों की ओर देख रहे हैं। एक ओर तो बंगला देश से रिफ्यूजीज का इनफ्लक्स हो रहा है और दूसरी ओर नई दिल्ली से मिनिस्टर्स का ऐक्सोडस हो रहा है। विश्व का जनमत कितना बनेगा यह कहना मुश्किल है। लेकिन सरकार कोई निर्णय नहीं कर पा रही है यह बात स्पष्ट दिखाई देती है।

सभापति महोदय, मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि बंगला देश से आने वालों के सम्बन्ध में अनुमान लगाने में गलती कैसे हुई?

मुझे याद है एक पत्रकार सम्मेलन में श्री खाडिलकर पर दबाव डाला गया था कि वह आने वालों की संख्या बतायें। और बड़ी मुश्किल

से उन्होंने कहा 30 लाख तक लोग आयेगे, ऐसा उनका अनुमान है। अभी उस दिन राज्य मंत्री महोदय ने कहा कि यह संख्या 60 लाख तक जा सकती है, और अब ऐसा दिखता है कि एक करोड़ तक लोग आ सकते हैं। अनुमान गलत होने के कारण हम उनकी व्यवस्था नहीं कर सके हैं, हमारे सारे प्रबन्ध विफल हो गए हैं और जो लोग आए हैं उनको अगणित कठिनाइयों का सामना करना पड़ रहा है।

अभी उस दिन मंत्री महोदय ने सदन में कहा कि वह सीमा प्रदेश के राज्यों से 25 लाख लोगों को हटाना चाहते हैं, दूसरे दिन सरकारी प्रवक्ता ने कहा कि यह 25 लाख की संख्या कैसे दे दी गई? श्री खाडिलकर ने राज्य सभा में 8 लाख के आंकड़े दिये थे। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या मंत्रालय में इस बारे में कोई तालमेल नहीं कि कितने लोग हटाये जाने वाले हैं और उन को हटाने में कितना समय लगेगा? कल मैंने रेडियो पर सुना कि सोवियट रशिया से प्लेन आये हैं और शरणार्थियों को हटा रहे हैं। कल माना कैम्प में केवल 600 लोग ले जाए जा सके। अगर 8 लाख को भी हटाना हो तो भी इसके लिये कोई प्रबन्ध चाहिये। क्या सरकार ने इसका कोई प्रबन्ध किया है?

आखिरी बात कह कर मैं खतम कर दूंगा। बंगला देश से आने वाले लोगों की देख भाल के लिए एक अलग मंत्रालय जरूरी है। थम मंत्रालय के साथ मिला कर यह काम नहीं चल सकता। जब इससे पहले कम लोग आये थे पूर्वी बंगाल से तब हमने उनकी देख भाल के लिए पृथक मंत्रालय बनाया था। एक होल-टाइम कैबिनेट मिनिस्टर रखना था जो ठीक देख भाल कर सकता था। आज एक पार्ट-टाइम मिनिस्टर रख कर आप बंगला देश वालों के साथ न्याय नहीं कर सकते हैं। क्या मैं आशा करूँ कि मंत्री महोदय यह बात प्रधान मंत्री तक पहुँचा देंगे कि बंगला देश से यहाँ आये लोगों की देख भाल के लिए मंत्रिमंडल स्तर के एक अलग मंत्री की आवश्यकता है?

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour): This situation arose out of the partition in the country. This was done and accepted by the then leaders of the congress. The responsibility should be shared by the Central Cabinet. The Central Government has to shoulder the responsibility if they have any sense of morality. They cannot absolve themselves from the responsibility. They have let down the people in the past. We see a repetition of this today.

If you go to the border your heart will bleed as you see the condition of these persons. The Government is not able to provide them with shelter. More than 50% of the evacuees are suffering because of this. There was some torrential rain in that part of the country and they under went great suffering. They suffer from scorching sun, when the sun comes out. They are really in a pitiable condition.

We talk about spending one rupee a day. For instance, it is said, they will give 400 grammes of rice. DMK are giving rice one rupee a measure. I don't know whether they can purchase that much quantity here. This Government is noted for one thing and that is corruption. We don't expect any real remedy from them.

They are telling again and again before the world that the Prime Minister had made a statement, a categorical assurance, that those who come from Bangla Desh, will be allowed to come in. You kindly go to Bagmara in Meghalaya. You kindly go to Rangra in Meghalaya and adjoining areas. You will know whether any refugees are stopped from coming in. Criminals and anti-socials are very active there. There are numerous cases of rape reported. I have received telegrams and letters. Mr. Minister, they are doing it on the strength of the confidential instruction or circular given by the Government saying: Do not allow Bangla Desh evacuees to come inside of Meghalaya. We want to have a clear and categorical answer. I want to know this: Is there any such circular by the Government of Assam or Meghalaya that you will restrict or stop people coming from Bangla Desh? If so, what are the contents of the circular? If not, under what authority are they doing it? The hon Minister had gone to the eastern region at public cost to see the refugees or evacuees. A lot of disturbing

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news is coming from Shillong. I would like to know whether she visited or did not visit Shillong. If she did not visit Shillong, what was the reason therefor ?

18.00 hrs.

DR. RANEN SEN : Government are tinkering with the problem of giving aid to the Bangla Desh evacuees, and in fact, are playing with their lives. I would like to know a few small facts. What is the actual number of evacuees that have come to India ? There is conflicting news about the number. What is the method that Government have adopted to ascertain the actual number, because I have in my possession certain facts to show that nearly 50 per cent of the refugees or evacuees are not registered. So, what is the basis for ascertaining the number of evacuees ?

Is it a fact or not, as reported in almost all West Bengal newspapers that not even 25 per cent of the people are registered and only the people who are registered get ration or money or whatever else is given by Government ?

Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee has already asked whether 25 lakhs of people are to be sent outside the border areas or whether the number is 8 lakhs. Let Government be very clear on this. Even if it be 8 lakhs, what is the arrangement made by Government to transport these 8 lakhs refugees or evacuees to other parts of India ? The newspapers have made the calculation that it will take at least six months to transfer 8 lakhs people at this rate, even with the help of the USA and USSR planes. So, will the Government let us know the actual transport arrangements, that they are going to make ?

Lastly have Government tried to ascertain how many people are going to return to Bangla Desh within a couple of months or three or four or six months ? These are the categorical questions for which I would like to have an answer by the hon. Minister.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : I share the concern of the hon. Members of this House. The problem of refugees is very big. Looking to the magnitude of the problem, if they do not feel satisfied, I think they are right to a certain extent. But may I ask them whether there is any

other country in the world which has witnessed such kind of influx as we have seen in India ?

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : His party is responsible for that.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : That being so, I feel that it is rather easier to criticise than to put things into practice. I think that Members and leaders of the Opposition parties are equally responsible and they owe as much duty to the country as we on this side of the House and in Government. We hope that they will cooperate with us in tackling this problem. This problem is a gigantic one and needs the whole hearted cooperation of all of us.

SHRI DASARATHA DEB (Tripura East) : I asked the Tripura Government to take our help but they refused. They have got a committee ; in that none of our MLAs or MPs was included. What type of co-operation does he want.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : Co-operation may be given in many ways.

SOME HON. MEMBERS : How ?

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : To raise the morale of the people, there can be co-operation ; it is no use going on crying in a vein that demoralises people. Therefore, I said that as leaders of the Opposition parties, they have certain responsibilities to the nation and should not utter certain words which do not behave them.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : The Minister has asked for our co-operation. Let him say categorically, one, two, three, four, five, six what co-operation they want and what we have denied to them.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : That we can give I think he knows that .. (Interruptions).

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : He is casting aspersions on Opposition leaders by saying that we are not co-operating in looking after the refugees. Let him say here and now specifically what co-operation he wants from us.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : Shri Samar Guha quoted certain figures which I think, are not correct. We receive figures from the State Government every day. These are based on daily reports. Therefore, when I give the figures, I think they are the correct ones and should be relied upon.

SHRI TRIDIB CHAUDHURI (Berhampore) : What is the latest figure ?

SHRI BALGOVID VERMA : Upto the 14th of this month, in West Bengal, the number is 43,90,101...

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Has he seen the statement of the Health Minister, Shri Manaluddin and the Chief Minister that 44.5 lakhs have come.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : These are the figures supplied by the State Government ; they are not our figures.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Then ask them why they issued that statement to the press.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : The present figures are : West Bengal 43,90,101, Assam, 1,87,609, Meghalaya 2,54,024, Tripura, 9,55,264, Bihar, 4,857, Total : 57,91,855. These are the official figures which should be relied upon and no credence should be given to newspaper reports because sometimes they publish such figures which have got no basis at all.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA (Serampore) : Are these registered figures ?

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : These are figures supplied by the State Government.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : On the basis of the estimate, Government will provide for expenditure and other things. Many people, without getting shelter in government camps, have taken shelter in the houses of benevolent people and relatives or others. These figures have not been taken into account.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : These are the figures registered with the Government and they include those who are inside and outside the camps as well.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA : How many are actually registered and how many are residing outside government camps? That figure you must supply to us.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : The figure inside camps is 36,58,037 and outside camps is 21,33,818. The total is 57,91,855.

He said that the figures were underestimated and that some persons have not been registered. There may be some persons who have not been registered. It is a long border of 135 miles, an open border, and people are crossing everywhere. When lakhs of refugees are crossing the border every day, it is humanly impossible to register each and everybody.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA : Why? Nobody wants to evade registration.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : There has been a charge that we did not stop the butchering of people in Bangla Desh, How can we interfere with what a foreign Government is doing in its soil? We did all that we could. We have been trying to mobilise public opinion. We have been sending people abroad and doing whatever lies in our power to see that the Government of Pakistan comes to its senses.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Then, why did you say that within six months they will return ?

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : Why do you feel agitated ?

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Perhaps you have gone to the border only once or twice. You will feel agitated if you see the conditions. Whenever we get an opportunity, we go there and see the people.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : We feel that it is a reasonable time, that during this time the conscience of the world community will be aroused and that they will come to their senses. We feel that the world community will exercise pressure on the Government of Pakistan so that a political settlement will be arrived at and people will be able to return safely, honourably and with full satisfaction to their homeland.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Why a political settlement? Yesterday the Prime Minister said in the Rajya Sabha that we will not impose any political settlement on Bangla Desh. This is stabbing the Bangla Desh revolution in the back. Let them go back and be killed, but do not talk of a political settlement. The only political solution is the withdrawal of the Pakistan army. You have started salesmanship of Yahya Khan.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : We believe that six months is a reasonable period within which conditions will become normal. We assure the House that we are not going to feed the refugees for good, and as the Prime Minister has said a number of times, we reserve the right to take appropriate action at the appropriate time. Therefore, I think hon. Members should have no doubt in their minds.

PROF. S. L. SAKSENA (Maharajganj) : If the world conscience has not been moved during the last three months, how will it be moved now?

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : Shri Guha referred to rations. The rations are distributed by the State Governments. We give advance to the State Government and the State Government is entirely responsible for making these arrangements. Two or three days back the hon. Member brought to my notice certain deficiencies in this matter and I have communicated them to the State Government and asked them to adhere strictly to the instructions conveyed from this place and that there should be no shortage in prescribed rations.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Where will they get fuel, salt and oil? That question has not been answered.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : They are supplied 400 gms. of rice and 300 gms. of vegetable and 100 gms. of dal.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : He is misleading the House.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : I am not misleading the House. This is what the Government of India has asked the State Governments to give and the Government is

paying for. Over and above these things they are also getting kerosene oil, edible oil and salt.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Either the Minister is wrong or I am wrong. For four or five days I have been visiting the camps in Bongaon and Bashirhat areas. It is my personal experience that they are given 400 gms. of rice, 100 gms. of dal and four pieces of onion and potatoes. Nothing else is given.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : I have said several times that it is the responsibility of the State Government. We give money to them to supply all these things. We shall bring to the notice of the State Government what the hon. Member has said here.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : On a point of order. We asked a specific question: what will the refugee actually get out of one rupee?

MR. CHAIRMAN : There is no point of order. He wants this information. I cannot compel the Minister to give the answer he wants.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : Mr. Samar Guha referred to the management of the camps, especially the community kitchen. So far as the community kitchens are concerned they should be entrusted to the refugees themselves. The refugees are being employed as far as possible in relief work either on a voluntary basis or on daily remuneration basis. Wherever it is possible they are associated with the cooking of meals but most of them like to have their dry rations and cook themselves. We do not want to injure their feelings. They were part of India sometime back and in the countryside there are still people who do not want to take cooked meals. If they do not take cooked meals we cannot force them. So they take their dry rations.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : They want some fuel. Without fuel how can they cook?

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : I visited one camp in Bongaon area. It was on the 6th and the 7th. I can mention particularly the brickfield camp where I found that fuel was distributed to the refugees.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Only where there is a community kitchen some fuel is given but where there are no community kitchens no fuel or salt or oil is given.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : The hon. Member has brought it to my notice, and I will see to it.

Then, he pointed out one thing regarding international help, and he said that most of the help was coming in kind. If they send any help in kind, how can we refuse it ?

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : I said kind ; not in cash.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : They are giving us in kind. Some cash is also coming. If you like, I can give the figures for what we have received so far. We have received international help to the tune of Rs. 30 crores. Out of this Rs. 30 crores, near about Rs. 1 crore is in cash ; that is, Rs. 92,83,629. This is cash. Various international organizations have given it.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : What about parliamentary delegation and the council.

SHRI DASARATHA DEB : Shri Samar Guha's question was not answered ; it was about the people who are living outside the camps.

MR. CHAIRMAN : One Member has spoken for half-an-hour. Do not intervene, because already, the Minister has enough questions to answer.

SHRI DASARATHA DEB : It is a very important question. Very many people are living outside the camps. What about them ? What is the answer ? Lakhs of people are staying outside the camps. They are not getting any ration.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : On this thing, I really share the concern the hon. Members. We are also very particular about it ; we are considering the issue, and we hope to extend this facility to all those who are staying with their relations as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN : He has asked about the parliamentary delegation. Have you got anything to say ?

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : So far as the parliamentary delegation is concerned, we are not averse to it. We will consider it.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : About the council ? He wanted our co-operation. We offer our co-operation. But there should be some machinery for having mutual co-operation, and that co-operation can be had if a council is formed, with a few Members, and the Minister as the Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN : He will answer the questions raised by Shri Vajpayee.

SHRI P. K. DEO : My questions are also there.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : Mr. Deo has asked two or three things. One was about the return of the refugees. He asked what is the solution for the refugee problem. I think we are alive to our duties. Do not think that we are not alive to our duties. When we have taken this responsibility on ourselves, we know how it should be done. I may tell you that we are seeing how the international community heeds to our proposal, and if nothing is coming forward, we will see to it as to how we can do it and what we can do. Once we are committed to democracy and other ideals, we will see that these ideals are kept high.

Then about the question whether the refugees will go back : not for a moment we should think that they will become what one may call a permanent burden to us. They will go back. There is no doubt about it. We have got faith in our people ; we have got faith in our Government, and we know we will be able to do it. (*Interruption*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Already, 55 minutes have been taken. I request you to complete in five minutes. Otherwise, you had better examine all the questions and lay the answers on the Table of the House.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : Then, the hon. Member wanted screening of the refugees. I may tell the House that the Government of India has given instructions to the State Government that every refugee who enters our country should

[Shri Balgovind Verma]

be properly screened, and steps are being taken.

Regarding the Meghalaya report, I have written to the Meghalaya Government. We have not received their reply yet. As soon as we receive it, we will take action.

Shri Vajpayee asked why we did not assess the possibility of this huge influx. I think nobody can know the future. We did not know that it will go to this extent. We expected only about 3 million. But conditions inside Bangla Desh are not congenial and so they are coming into India. There is no alternative but to accommodate them.

Some reports have appeared in the press and some members also have some misgivings about the number of camps we are going to setup and the number of refugees we are going to accommodate. The other day I said, we are going to set up 50 large size camps to accommodate as many as 25 lakhs refugees. That holds good, I also said, in West Bengal and Tripura, there are certain portions where the pressure of refugees is very high. To relieve that pressure, we are opening large size camps inside West Bengal and Tripura, Assam, Meghalaya, Bihar, M.P., Orissa and U.P. (Interruption) I will give you the correct figures of the camps we are going to set up ; In Tripura, we are setting up 10 camps to accommodate 5 lakhs of refugees ; in Assam, 2 camps

and 1 lakh refugees ; in Meghalaya 2 camps and 1 lakh refugees ; in West Bengal 20 camps and 10 lakhs of refugees ; in Mana and Raipur, 4 camps and 2 lakhs of refugees ; in Bihar 5 camps and 2½ lakhs of refugees ; in Orissa 2 camps and 1 lakh refugees.

SHRI P. K. DEO : When the Orissa Government has not agreed, how can you do it ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let the Minister give his figures.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : UP (Allahabad) 2 camps with 1 lakh people , Madhya Pradesh (Bilaspur) 3 camps with 1,50,000 people. The total comes to 50 camps with 25 lakhs of people.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The Minister will examine all the points which have been raised by hon. Members and for those points on which he has not given any reply he will prepare a statement and lay it on the Table of the House. We will now adjourn.

18.32 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Thursday, June 17, 1971 (Jyaishta 27, 1893 (Saka).