

LOK SABHA DEBATES

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LOK SABHA

Wednesday, January 30, 1980/Magha
10, 1901 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Fifty-Eight
Minutes past ten hours of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

10.58 hrs.

OBSERVANCE OF SILENCE IN THE MEMORY OF MARTYRS

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, as you are aware, the nation is observing two minutes silence today in the memory of those who gave their lives in the struggle for India's freedom. We shall stand in silence for two minutes when the gun is fired.

(The Members then stood in silence
for two minutes)

V

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

11.2 hrs.

Non Tribals in Meghalaya

*37. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the driving out of non-tribals from Meghalaya since October, 1979;

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government to stop such eviction and protect the lives and properties of non-tribals in the State; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to restore peace and normalcy in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS & IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH): (a) to (c). A large number of persons are reported to have left their homes in the course of recent disturbances in the State. According to information furnished by Government of Meghalaya, 1789 persons have been accommodated in relief camps set up by the State Government. Precise number of persons who might have left the State, is not known.

The State Government have taken administrative measures to strengthen law and order machinery for maintaining public peace. In addition, the following measures have also been taken:

- (i) Meghalaya Preventive Detention Ordinance, 1979 was promulgated on the 26th December, 1979 to enable adequate preventive action being taken.
- (ii) Patrolling has been intensified in vulnerable and sensitive areas;
- (iii) To deal with intimidation by landlords, offences under Section 506 of IPC have been made cognizable and non-bailable.
- (iv) Appeal has been made to political parties and local press to help promote atmosphere of peace and harmony.
- (v) Efforts are being made to enable the evacuees to return to their original homes.

The Centre has been in constant touch with the State Government impressing upon them the urgent need to restore peace and normalcy. Assistance was also made available to the State Government to deal with the situation.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: I am constrained to say that from the reply it appears that the Central Government is not aware of the seriousness of the situation there. The other day I referred to a representation to the Prime Minister from the Meghalaya Minorities Coordination Committee of Ceylon in which it has been stated how many incidents have taken place, how many houses have been gutted, etc.—fifty houses were gutted, there were eighteen cases of murder, 235 shops were looted, burnt and destroyed, 3,500 people have been rendered homeless, out of whom 2500 are residing to different camps. One MLA Mr. Manik Das and another ex-MLA were killed. Is the Central Government now going to depend on the good wishes of those persons who are carrying on this agitation only against national interest?

I would like to know whether the Government is aware of the Ceylon 'bund' which was observed on 25th Oct. 1979. There was a calculated attempt to evict non-tribals from Meghalaya and one gentleman by name Prof. Martin Majore—I gave the name on the last occasion—has been instigating this. So, what steps have been taken by the Central Government in this matter, for the purpose of not only providing relief to those who have lost their hearth and home but to try to impress on the State Government to take steps against law breakers there who are carrying on a deliberate agitation to drive away Indian nationals from a part of the country. I would like to know what concrete steps have been taken—as the reply will only encourage those agitations.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: I have mentioned in my statement that there has been a series of incidents and some of them, as stated by my hon.

friend, have been committed in the year 1979 when one M.L.A., one ex-M.L.A. and one Nepalese tribal were murdered. There was a series of incidents like that and we have been constantly in touch with the Meghalaya Government and impressing upon them that they should take whatever steps and measures are possible to maintain law and order and to give protection to those people whose security is in danger. I have also mentioned the Preventive Detention Ordinance that has been promulgated by the Meghalaya Government. We have been placing at the disposal of the Maghalaya Government whatever assistance they require, even including Army. Some Detachments have been placed at their disposal. We are fully aware of the situation and I may assure the Hon. Member that we will do whatever is possible within the limitations of the Constitution. There is a legally elected Government there and whatever is possible under the Constitution will be done. We can assure this House that we shall certainly do whatever is possible to maintain law and order and create a sense of security among those people who have been victims of this violence.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Several demands were made in that representation of the Minorities Committee like instituting a judicial enquiry into the incident and grant of compensation to those families which have suffered or families of those who have been murdered. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister what steps have been taken by the Government with regard to those demands and I would like to know whether a political solution is sought to be found out. That is also important because slogans were raised on the 25th October and subsequently like 'Bengalees go out', 'No deletion of foreigners' names', 'Jyoti Basu hushiar' etc. and effigies of Jyoti Basu and also of Assamese leaders like Devkant Borooah were burnt. This happened. So it is also necessary to find a political solution. What steps is Govern-

ment of India taking at the Central level to call the leaders of different political parties to hold discussions, if not to stop this, at least to contain it immediately? This is very important and I would like to know the Central Government's unequivocal answer so that the people may know what is the fate of the people in that part of the country.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH:

So far as the relief measures are concerned, relief camps have been set up and the displaced persons are being looked after. Rs. 1,50,000 have been sanctioned for these relief measures and every possible assistance is being given to these victims to go back to their homes. We are trying our best to allay their fears and given them necessary protection.

With regard to the political solution to this problem, I entirely agree with the hon. Member. The Prime Minister is fully aware of the situation. We are trying to have a dialogue with all the people concerned and find out a formula, arrive at a consensus, that will be satisfying to all the parties concerned.

SHRI P. A. SANGAMA: What has happened in Meghalaya is very very unfortunate. Just now the hon. Minister has said that one MLA and one ex-MLA had been murdered. These happened on the 13th December, 1979, and today we are towards the end of January, 1980. I want to know whether any culprit has been apprehended in those cases and if not, why even after such a long lapse of time, the culprits could not be apprehended in such cases. This is the first part of my question.

The second part of my question is that the situation in Meghalaya, or for that matter in the north-eastern region is very very complicated. There are many reasons for this, one of the reasons being that the people in the north-eastern region have got an apprehension that, due to unchecked influx of a large number of people from other countries, not from our

country—foreign nationals—the original people in the north-eastern region may be outnumbered. Unless this apprehension is removed from the minds of the people, I do not think there will be an easy solution to the problem in the north-eastern region. In this respect I want to put a categorical question to the hon. Home Minister whether, in view of that apprehension, Government is going to take certain measures to remove the apprehension, as has been promised in the manifesto of the Congress-I where it is said under the heading 'Protection to Tribal population'.

"Adequate measures will be taken to prevent their being uprooted from their original abodes in the north-eastern and other States of India."

What steps is Government going to take on the lines of this promise in the manifesto to remove the apprehension in the minds of the people there that their number may be outnumbered by the influx?

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: As regards prosecution or whether action is to be taken against those culprits who committed the murders, till now we have no information. We will contact the Meghalaya Government and will find out, ascertain, from them as to what is the legal action that is being taken against those people who were responsible for these murders....

MR. SPEAKER: His question is whether anybody has been arrested or not.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: I will furnish the information.

With regard to the apprehension in the minds of the local people that they will be outnumbered by the influx of foreigners, some steps have been taken by the Government of Meghalaya. Check-posts have started functioning at five places in Meghalaya, namely, Sibbari, Pynursla, Mawsynram, Cherrapunji and Khliehrat.

A cell headed by the Superintendent of Police has been set up for effective enforcement of the measures against infiltration.

A cell in Political Department of Meghalaya has been set up for determining expeditiously the nationality of suspected foreigners.

The State Government also proposes to set up two Tribunals on Foreign Nationals to ensure the deportation of those who are found to be foreign nationals. A legislation on the subject entitled Maintenance of Public Order Amendment Bill, 1979 was introduced in the last session of the State Assembly.

These are the measures that are being taken by the State Government to stop this influx of foreigners and we have to watch the result of these measures that are taken. I can assure the hon Member that we will be in constant touch with the State Government and see that the infiltration is checked.

SHRI CHANDRAJEET YADAV: It is a matter of national concern that in certain parts of the country this issue of tribals and non-tribals, Assamese and non-Assamese is being raised—very serious things are happening. There are two types of apprehensions. (1) Why there is so much of influx of unauthorised foreign nationals in our country and why is it that the government is not able to take effective steps? It is not a question of the Meghalaya government setting up certain posts and appointing certain officers to stop that. If the citizens in any part of the country have serious apprehensions that they will be outnumbered by foreigners, it is not a question of that particular State alone, it is a national question. I would like to know from the government whether the Government of India is taking necessary steps to see that foreigners who are unauthorised and who are coming to different parts of the country, particularly, the sensitive regions of the country will be stopped and

will the hon. Minister give the country an assurance to this effect and also that this will not be allowed in future?

Another question that arises out of this is that the Indian nationals have a full right to settle in any part of the country. Therefore, if there are certain elements which in the name of the region or language or tribe or religion are behind this move against their own brother citizens and if they are making this kind of agitation or creating a situation, effective measures should be taken against those people and to see that this kind of a situation does not arise and that all Indian citizens feel assured that they can live like co-citizens in any part of the country. Will the hon. Minister give this kind of assurance to this House?

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: The north-eastern region including Assam is a very sensitive region and the problems are complex. The Prime Minister the other day has highlighted the problem and sought the co-operation of all the Opposition Parties to arrive at a certain consensus to deal with the situation. She is on it and I am confident this problem would be settled when she contacts the other Opposition leaders and also the people living in that area.

About the local people, some of those people who have vested interests are fomenting this trouble and we are trying to identify them. The tribals also have certain genuine fears and we should not lose sight of those fears and they feel that outsiders even from other parts of the country come there and they dominate the commerce and trade and they monopolise and purchase the lands and outnumber the local population.....

SHRI N. G. RANGA: There are money-lenders also.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: Secondly, their apprehension and fear has gone to such an extent that they do not want even the Central Government offices to be located in Shillong.

There is a proposal to have a Cantonment in Shillong but they said 'We do not want this Cantonment also.' So the fears have gone to such an extent. So we have to allay their fears and apprehensions. That is why an Act has been promulgated to ban completely purchase of land from a tribal by a non-tribal.

There were threats held out by some of the tribal people to encourage or to tell the landlords to evict the Bengali tenants and the Nepali tenants who are working in their fields. For that purpose also, the Meghalaya Government is enacting a law. These are the fears on both sides. And this matter has to be gone into as this is such a complex problem. We may not be able to give a sort of a direct solution for this. The Prime Minister also said that.

Deaths due to Communal Disturbances

*38. PROF. MADHU DANAVATE: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the annual rate of deaths due to communal disturbances during the years 1966—77 and 1977—1979;

(b) whether these comparative figures show a decline; and

(c) if so, the reasons thereof?

गृह मंत्री (श्री जैल सिंह): (क) से (ग). सदन के पटल पर एक विवरण रखा जाता है।

विवरण

साम्प्रदायिक झगड़ों में मारे गए व्यक्तियों की 1966 से 1979 तक का वर्षवार विवरण नीचे दिया गया है :

वर्ष	मारे गये व्यक्तियों की संख्या
1966	45
1967	251
1968	133

वर्ष	मारे गये व्यक्तियों की संख्या
1969	674
1970	298
1971	103
1972	70
1973	72
1974	87
1975	33
1976	39
1977	36
1978	110
1979	260

2. 1966-77 का वार्षिक औसत 153 है। 1967 से 1970 तक की अवधि में साम्प्रदायिक तनाव बहुत अधिक था। फिर भी, संगठित प्रयत्नों तथा लगातार निगरानी से स्थिति में उल्लेखनीय सुधार हुआ और इसके कारण साम्प्रदायिक झगड़ों तथा मौतों की संख्या में भी काफी कमी हुई और वर्ष 1972 से 76 के दौरान मारे गए व्यक्तियों का वार्षिक औसत केवल 60 था। 1978 और 1979 के दौरान साम्प्रदायिक झगड़ों की घटनाओं में फिर वृद्धि हो गई जिसके कारण 1977-79 का वार्षिक औसत बढ़ कर 135 हो गया।

PROF. MADHU DANAVATE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the statement that has been laid on the Table of the House gives the number of persons killed from 1966 to 1979.

I would like to know from the Home Minister whether it is true or not that looking at the very same figure which he has given, it is wrong to politicalise the issue of communal disturbances and communal riots but to admit the fact that it is the anti-social communal elements which are responsible for this irrespective of the set-up of the Government. From the figures given, it is clear that it is wrong to attribute the communal disturbances and riots to any particular party. Therefore, is it not a fact that, from the figures that