

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : हम ने पासपोर्ट देने नियम सरल कर दिये हैं लेकिन इस का अर्थ यह नहीं है कि जो भारतीय स्ट्रैटेलिया जाना चाहते हैं वे यह निश्चित किये बिना ही वहां चले जाएं। उन्हें यह निश्चित कर वहां जाना चाहिए कि वे वहां जा कर कौन-सा रोजगार करेंगे या अन्य क्या करेंगे। किसी एजेंट या एजेंसी के बहकाने में आकर वे यहां से चले जाएं, इस के लिए उन्हें सावधान होने की जरूरत है। अगर आप सब हमारी मदद करेंगे तो हम भी उन्हें सावधान करने में उनकी मदद करेंगे।

MR. SPEAKER: Your question has nothing to do with the listed question. Don't record. (Interruptions)**

श्री राग नंदर इत्यादि: अध्यक्ष महोदय, यह प्रश्न स्ट्रैटेलिया के मामले में है। लेकिन मैं आप के माध्यम से मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या यह सही नहीं है कि पासपोर्ट देने की प्रक्रिया को जितना सरल बनाया गया है, उतनी ही संख्या में एजेंट लोग पनाप गये हैं और रोजाना लोग पकड़े जाते हैं? ये एजेंट लोग पासपोर्ट आफिस के लोगों से मिले होते हैं और इसी कारण से बहुत गड़बड़ियां होती हैं।

मैंने अपने निर्वाचन क्षेत्र के एक मियां जी का पासपोर्ट बनवाया था लेकिन उसमें फोटो एक सरदार जी का लगा दिया गया। मियां जी के नाम से सरदार जी के पासपोर्ट का कोई तालमेल नहीं बैठता। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि कितने एजेंट लोग हैं जिनको आपके आफिस के लोग जानते हैं? क्या आप इस मामले में कोई सुधार लायेंगे जिससे लोगों को परेशानी न हो और गरीब लोग जो हमारे पास आ कर रोते हैं, वे इस सब से बचें और वे एजेंटों के पैसों के चक्कर में न आयें?

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी: अगर वलत फोटो लगा कर पासपोर्ट देने में कोई भ्रम हुई

है तो उसका सुधार होना चाहिये। माननीय सदस्य अगर मुझे लिख कर दें तो मैं मामले की जांच कराऊंगा। मैं यह मानता हूँ कि कहीं कहीं पासपोर्ट कार्यालयों में काम करने वाले कर्मचारी भी बाहर जो एजेंसियां या एजेंट सक्रिय हैं उनके साथ जुड़े रहते हैं। कुछ मामलों में हम उन्हें पकड़ने में सफल भी हुए हैं। हम इस मामले में धीरे-धीरे कड़ाई कर रहे हैं। लेकिन कठिनाई यह है कि लिखकर शिकायत देने में लोगों को संकोच होता है और इसलिए एक दम कार्रवाई करना थोड़ा मुश्किल होता है।

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY: Sir, the Government has devised a very good method for emigration of the persons to Gulf countries through the Labour Ministry. I would like to know from the Minister whether the same procedure will be adopted in the case of other countries also.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: It is a suggestion for action. It will be taken into account.

Indian Workers on Strike in Kuwait

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*536. SHRI SAUGATA ROY:
SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian workers in Kuwait have been on strike;

(b) if so, the reasons for the strike; and

(c) whether the Government of India took any action in the matter and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE): (a) The workers of the Engineering Projects (India) Ltd. and its associates were on strike from 12th July to 27th July 1978.

(b) The strike started following an altercation on 11th July, in which a worker was alleged to have been beaten.

(c) Our Ambassador in Kuwait remained in touch with the Government of Kuwait, the E.P.I. and the labour leaders with a view to persuading the workers to withdraw the strike and restore normalcy in the Project. The Labour went back to work on 27th July.

SHRI D. N. TIWARY: Sir I have given a Calling Attention Notice on this matter. I want to know whether it has been admitted or not.

MR. SPEAKER: I do not think that it has come up before me yet.

SHRI D. N. TIWARY: I gave the notice twice.

MR. SPEAKER: I will look into it. You know last week was a very busy week for all of us. Now, first supplementary by Mr. Saugata Roy.

SHRI SAUGATA ROY: The problem regarding this question is that it relates to External Affairs Ministry. It also relates to the Industry Ministry and the Labour Ministry. Of the 60,000 employees in Kuwait, a majority of them do all sorts of manual work and sending foreign exchange to our country. People working in the E.P.I. are very badly paid. They have been paid 1½ dinars per day which is very low according to Kuwait standard. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Indian Embassy in Kuwait has informed him of the very low payment made to the Indian workers in E.P.I. and also whether they have informed that these workers are employed by the sub-contractors who do not even pay them the notified pay as a result of which there is a lot of discontent among the workers working in E.P.I.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: The hon. Member has rightly pointed out that this project is being looked after by the Ministry of Industry. I had written a letter to my friend, Mr. George Fernandes to be present when this question comes up. But he is held up in the Rajya Sabha.

SHRI K. GOPAL: He is mediating.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: All mediation has been given up during the Question Hour. So, Sir, it will not be correct to say that the workers working in the Project in Kuwait are being paid less because the wages were fixed before the workers decided to start work. We have taken the contract and then there are sub-contractors also.

SHRI SAUGATA ROY: All the workers are recruited through them.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: That is the whole difficulty. We are thinking in terms of setting up a Directorate at the Central level to recruit workers. But I would like to make one thing very clear. Once the wages are fixed, there are other facilities also; they are getting housing facilities. They are getting food at reduced prices. They are also getting medical facilities. Once they decide to go out and if they create trouble there, it is not a question of Kuwait only, the whole policy of the Government will be defeated, if people abroad feel that having Indian workers is like inviting trouble. But in this case, there has been some dereliction of duty on the part of our high officials also. An inquiry is being conducted and I hope that everything will be all right. But those who go abroad, they must understand that if they want to go on strike, then let them remain here.

SHRI SAUGATA ROY: I welcome the Minister's statement regarding the Central Government's thinking for setting up a Directorate to recruit Indian labour on the projects abroad, because this sub-contractor system is very inhuman system. I also want to know—this project where 2000 houses are to be built is a prestigious project. We got it in the face of very tough competition from foreign firms—whether the Ministry has got any information that the aim of this Kuwait strike was to smear the name of India in gulf countries; and some workers were instigated by some foreign firms who are in competition

with EFT; and whether the Minister has any information regarding the names of the foreign firms and the foreign countries who have done this instigation work of Indian workers.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: The possibility of certain foreign firms who would like to create difficulty for India provoking some of our workers cannot be ruled out. But it will not be proper for me to disclose the names of any country.

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister has mentioned that high officials were involved in this case. About 78,000 Indian workers were sent abroad. Nearly 10,000 of them are working as maid servants; and in Kuwait the number is the highest. I know that this is a problem arisen out of the world competition for getting labour contracts in order to earn foreign exchange, but at the same time we should not forget the fate of those poor employee who are employed there to earn gold. In this particular case, the workers of Engineering Projects India Ltd. are ill-paid; and to stay in a poor living condition, some of them are to stay even in open air, no shed. Sir, I would like to know it from the hon. Minister what was the ground on which their due demands, according to Residence-cum-work-permit, were not considered and fulfilled before the strike held on 12th July, 1978. (B) What were the terms and conditions at the time of issuing passports to the workers? It is reported in the newspapers that after teargas and batton-charge on 27th July, 403 workers of Engineering Projects India Ltd. were arrested and severally beaten up in jail. Later on, 185 of them had been released. I would like to know whether the rest of the workers 218 are still behind prison bars, whether there is any proposal to return back those workers.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: As per the latest report received from the Project Authorities in Kuwait, out of 403 workers arrested, 188 workers have been released and they have

returned to the camps. After screening the list of 256 persons who were not willing to work as per conditions and terms of the contract between the workers concerned and the associate contractor, a fresh list has been prepared. This includes 218 persons who are still in police custody.

AN HON. MEMBER: In jails.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Now they are in the police custody, according to the information available with us, 221 workers have been repatriated to India so far. As far as some of the grievances of the workers are concerned, they are brought to the notice of the management and negotiations have been started; and some of the demands which were quite reasonable, for example, payment of wages on the stipulated date, were immediately accepted. But even then a section of the workers decided to go on strike. Possibly some of the workers acted in a very undesirable manner. The police had to be called.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Anglo-American Company gave them a beat up. You have been wrongly informed.

MR. SPEAKER: This is simply to inform you. You take the information.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I am replying on the basis of information that I have received.

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN: I have categorically asked regarding their housing problem. They are lying in the open.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: It is not correct. Nobody is staying in the open.

श्री इरिका नाथ तिवारी : जो सूचना मुझे मिली है, जिसे मैं मंत्री जी को देने जा रहा हूँ उसके बारे में उनसे जानना चाहूंगा कि क्या वह सही है, घोर धगर सही है तो वह क्या स्टैप ले रहे हैं? सूचना यह है कि यहाँ के प्रोब्लम के जो हैंड ग्रॉफ मैनेजमेंट हैं,

शायद कोई बर्मा हैं जो कि रिटायर्ड आफिसर हैं, वह बर्कों को भड़काते हैं कि तुम स्ट्राइक करो, तुम्हारा बेटा प्रोवैक्यूट हो जायेगा, भ्रगर नहीं करोगे तो कुछ नहीं होगा। क्या उनका वहाँ पर बर्कों को इस तरह से भड़काना सही है, भ्रगर सही नहीं है तो क्या आप इन्फायरी करायेंगे और क्या स्टैप लेने जा रहे हैं, यह बतायेंगे ?

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : मुझे इस बारे में कोई जानकारी नहीं है। माननीय सदस्य एक जिम्मेदार सदस्य हैं, उन्होंने बड़ी गम्भीरता से आरोप लगाया है और हम इसके बारे में गम्भीरता से छानबीन करेंगे।

श्री लखन लाल कपूर : यहाँ से जो मजदूर कुर्बत जाते हैं और जो कंट्रैक्टर्स उनको यहाँ से ले जाते हैं, मैं मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या यह सही है कि वह सब कंट्रैक्टर्स उन मजदूरों को यहाँ से ले जाने से पहले ही उनसे काफी रुपया, 5, 5 हजार रुपया ले लेते हैं ?

वहाँ पर उन मजदूरों का जो वेतन तय होता है, उसमें से वह रुपया काट लिया जाता है जिसकी वजह से उन लोगों को वहाँ वेतन कम मिलने के कारण उनके साथ ज्यादतियाँ होती हैं। वही कंट्रैक्टर्स वहाँ की स्थानीय गवर्नमेंट को कहते हैं कि उनके चिनाफ एक्शन लो। क्या यह बात सही है, क्या मंत्री जी इसकी जांच करायेंगे और यहाँ से जाने वाले मजदूरों की व्यवस्था आपकी माध्यम से हो, क्या ऐसी व्यवस्था करायेंगे ?

क्या यह भी सही है कि सरकार को बाध्य होकर वहाँ से काफी मजदूरों को अपने खर्च पर अपने देश में वापिस लाना पड़ा है ?

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : जी हाँ, कुछ मजदूरों को हमें अपने खर्च पर वापिस

लाना पड़ा है। इस तरह की शिकायतें मिली हैं कि कंट्रैक्टर्स या सब-कंट्रैक्टर्स मजदूरों को भर्ती करने से पहले उनसे रुपया लेते हैं, लेकिन इस मामले में भ्रगर कोई निश्चित शिकायत मिलती है, तो हम उसकी जांच करते हैं। हम ऐसे कंट्रैक्टर्स को ग्लैक लिस्ट कर भी चुके हैं और आगे भी करेंगे, लेकिन मुझे लगता है कि कंट्रैक्टर वाला मामला ही ऐसा है कि जो भ्रगर जारी रहा तो गड़बड़ होगी। लेकिन सरकार को प्रबन्ध करना पड़ेगा सब तरह के मजदूरों की मांग को पूरा करने का और यह प्रबन्ध जिस दिन हम कर लेंगे, उसी दिन संभव है इस कंट्रैक्टर पद्धति से छुटकारा मिल जाये।

Report Captioned "Plot to Down-Grade India at U.N."

*537. SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report published in "The 'Hindustan Times' of 1st August, 1978 'plot to down-grade India at United Nations'; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereon?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAEYEE): (a) Yes, Sir,

(b) The Government of India is not aware of any plot to down-grade India in the United Nations. The question of Indian representation in the United Nations Secretariat is constantly reviewed by Government and continuous efforts are made to ensure adequate representation by Indians at higher level posts in the United Nations Secretariat.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY: We were holding the post of Under-Secretary-General. Now, recently we got Assistant Secretary-General's post. That means, our position has been downgraded there. What is the reaction of the Government to this?