

RAJYA SABHA

*Thursday, the 26th November, 1992/ 5
Agrahayana, 1914 {Saka}*

The House met at eleven of the clock, Mr. Chairman in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Chakma Refugees in Tripura Refugee Camps

*41. SHRI SUDHIR RANJAN MAJUM-DAR : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) what is the estimated number of Bangladeshi Chakma refugees staying in various refugee camps in Tripura at present;

(b) what is the approximate expenditure incurred on them so far;

(c) what steps Government have taken to send these refugees back to Bangladesh; and

(d) what are the main hurdles in sending back these Chakma refugees ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO) : (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The estimated number of Bangladeshi Chakma refugees staying in various camps in Tripura is about 53,000 at present.

(b) Expenditure incurred on Chakma refugees so far amounted to Rs. 36.14 crores as of March 1992.

(c) and (d) The question of early repatriation of Chakma refugees has been taken up with the Government of Bangladesh. After discussions on this subject held during the visit of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh to India in May 1992, it was agreed by both sides to arrange speedy repatriation of all Chakma refugees to Bangladesh in full safety and security. We have since been in touch with Bangladesh authorities in order to devise requisite arrangements in this regard. 1—404 RSS/9.5

SHRI SUDHIR. RANJAN MAJUM-DAR : Sir, since I was the Chief Minister there, I had the opportunity to Meet them and talk to them and to know their views. As far as I know, they are willing to go back. Though they are willing to go back, they are not going back. What are the reasons for this? The main reason is that their life is not secure there. Their lands are forcibly occupied by the other community, most of the lands, by the majority community. Their properties are insecure. Then the honour of their women is outraged. These are the reasons for which they are not willing to go back. On account of this, they are demanding autonomy because autonomy is required to maintain human rights there.

My first question is whether the honourable Minister has ever decided to visit that area and come to know what is there in their minds.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Sir, the honourable Member was the Chief Minister of that State and, therefore, he knows the situation well.

As far as my visiting that State is concerned, the question does not really arise because the Government of Tripura itself had suggested that such a visit was not necessary. We sounded them and they said that it was not necessary.

May I say here that this problem has' been existing for a long number of years? . But, for the first time, there was an understanding at the highest level. When our Prime Minister took up the matter with the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, that was the first time when there was an understanding and there was acceptance on the part of the Government of Bangladesh at the highest level that this problem must be expeditiously solved and *they* also expressed their willingness to take back all the Chakma refugees who are there now, as the honourable Member, who was the Chief Minister of Tripura and who used to represent to us about the difficulties there in his State, knows.

Now, Sir, I agree with the honourable Member that they are refugees and we must look at this problem from all points

of view including the human rights point i of view. Therefore, that is important and that is what we have impressed upon the Government of Bangladesh, that conditions for their security when they return to the Chittagong Hill Tracts must be created and their legitimate interests must be protected and their grievances, among which are those mentioned by the honourable Member, must also find a solution.

SHRI SUDHIR RANJAN MAJUM-DAR : My second question is whether the Chakma refugees have put forth some demands to the Government of Bangladesh, particularly for autonomy.

Sir, as I have already mentioned, human rights of the Chakmas in Bangladesh are violated. We have got a noble tradition. We are fighting for human rights.

Sir, I want to know from the hon. Minister what steps, what measures the Government has taken to ensure autonomy and security for them there.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO : Sir, in order to meet all these grievances and to find a fair and just and acceptable settlement for all concerned, the Government of Bangladesh, we are informed, has appointed a Political Committee. The problem is not just a question of law and order and security as strictly construed, but it is a political question. A Political Committee has now been appointed by them, and this Committee is in touch, from our reports, with these populations, including the populations which are refugees in the camps in Tripura.

SHRI DAVID LEDGER : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the infiltration of Bangladeshi nationals into some of the States of the North-East has been a matter of serious concern for the citizens living in that part of the country for quite some time now. Sir, the apprehension and the concern are not unjustified in view of the fact that the continued and unabated influx of foreign nationals from that country has seriously affected the economy of these States, apart from threatening to affect the demographic pattern of the society there. Sir, for quite

some time we have been hearing that the Government of India proposes to issue identity cards to citizens living in some States of the country. Sir, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether it is a fact that the Government of India has a proposal to issue identity cards to citizens living in some of the States of this country, and if so, what are those States ?

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO : Sir, the question concerns, as you will tell me, Chakma refugees in Tripura refugees camps. This question, I respectfully submit, Sir, does not arise out of that. In any case, it would be for the Home Ministry to deal with it.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO) : Sir, if I may add to that, the proposal to introduce the system of identity cards has been there with the Government for some time. I would not be able to say right now what exactly is the stage. But I can say from personal knowledge that this has been with us for some time. I can give information later to any Member or I could convey it to the House in any other way.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN : Sir, the reply that has been given by the hon. Minister in writing is not more than the press reports that appeared at different times. So, it does not give any additional information. And whatever the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. External Affairs Minister said also does not throw much light on it. Sir, according to the reply, 53,000 Chakma refugees are still in the camps in Tripura and, perhaps, they are still trickling in. Sir, Bangladesh is a small country. They had also the refugee problem with Burma. After their discussions with the Burmese Government, they could come to a certain settlement and a number of Burmese Muslim refugees who were in Bangladesh have gone back to Burma. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, particularly the Prime Minister that while this could be successful in between Burma and Bangladesh, what the political obstacles or other obstacles are that are standing in the way of negotiations between Bangladesh and our Government that 53,000 such Chakma refugees are still in Tripura. Sir, on the one hand we are suffering from another problem, the infiltration of people,

both Muslims and Hindus, from Bangladesh into Tripura, Assam and West Bengal. Then this Chakma problem has arisen. So, I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister whether this issue has been taken up and if so in what manner it has been specifically taken up and what the political objections are that have been raised by the Bangladesh Government for repatriation of Chakma refugees, as they are also refusing to accept the infiltrators from that side. So, this is an attitude shown by the Bangladesh Government which is clearly putting us in trouble. So, I would like to know that out of 53,000 Chakma refugees, how many have been already repatriated. About the rest of them, I want to know the stage to which these discussions have reached, and whether there is any favourable response for the Bangladesh Government and whether there is any possibility in the near future for their repatriation. About autonomy and other things with Bangladesh, that is not our subject. It is the subject of Bangladesh Government and the Bangladesh people and the Chakma people. That is not the subject with us.

Our concern is to repatriate these Chakma refugees. So, I would like to know the specific measures taken by the Prime Minister in this regard and I would also like to know the stage at which these discussions have reached.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO : There is no unwillingness expressed. On the contrary, there is a willingness expressed by the Bangladesh Government, and this was expressed at the time of the visit of our Prime Minister and at subsequent times also when the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh visited this country separately. There is a willingness on their part to take back these Chakma refugees. But the problem however arises from the refugees themselves as they do not find the atmosphere conducive with regard to their security and also on account of the fact that a solution has not been found to their grievances which, in their view, are their legitimate grievances. This is the position. Therefore, as I have mentioned, and I repeat, though the problem has been there for a long time, it is for the first time that there is an understanding and an acceptance on the part of the Bangladesh

Government to take back these people, and not merely to take them back, but also to sit down and discuss to find out a solution to their legitimate grievances, and hence the appointment of a political committee for the first time which was done by this Government.

श्री आनन्द प्रकाश शीतल : सभापति महोदय, बंगला देश के चकमाओं की जो समस्या है वह मानवाधिकार को लेकर के उनके ऊपर जो अत्याचार हो रहे हैं और वे सारे लोग असुरक्षा की भावना से हमारे देश में आ रहे हैं और यह भी है कि वे काफी समय से हमारे देश में रह रहे हैं और वापिस जाने में उनको बहुत असुरक्षा लग रही है इसलिए वे लोग यह चाहते हैं कि हम जहाँ वापिस न जाएँ और वहीं स्थाई रूप से बस जाएँ। इस भावना के तहत अभी मंत्री जी ने जो अपने जवाब में कहा है कि मई, 1992 में बंगला देश की प्रधान मंत्री जब भारत आई थी तो उनसे इस संबंध में, हरणार्थियों को वापिस लेने के बारे में, बात-चीत हुई थी। मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि जब असुरक्षित भावना के कारण वे लोग वापिस नहीं जाना चाहते तो क्या हमारी सरकार बंगला देश की सरकार से ऐसा प्रस्ताव करने का विचार रखती है कि उनकी सम्पत्ति और उनके बसने से लिए जो जमीन है वह हमारे देश को स्थानांतरित करे ?

दूसरे, इसके साथ ही मैं यह भी जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या मानवाधिकारों पर चोट को लेकर हम विश्व स्तर पर मानवाधिकार की सुरक्षा के लिए जो संस्थाएँ या संघ बने हैं उनमें भी बंगला देश को विरुद्ध कोई स्थान उठाने के बारे में सोच रहे हैं ?

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO : We do not want transfer of anybody's land or any country's land to us. We only want that our own land should be in our occupation and others should not come and settle down there. That is the principle on which we are working on all the issues, including this issue.

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद साधु : श्रीमान, मंत्री महोदय के जवाब से दो-तीन बातें निकली हैं। इन्होंने ठीक साहस के साथ कहा है कि बाखिर इतने दिन बाद बंगला देश की प्रधान मंत्री

महोदय ने स्वीकार किया है इस प्रश्न पर बात-चीत करके उन्हें वापिस लाने के लिए। इससे साफ मालूम होता है कि बंगला देश की सरकार उनको वापिस लाने की मनःस्थिति में बरसों तक नहीं रही है, अब केवल एक प्रेसर के कारण उन्होंने स्वीकार किया है, इसलिए इमानदारी दिखाई नहीं देती। पिछले वर्षों की घटनाएँ इस बात का सबूत हैं कि जितने भी हिन्दू हैं, बौद्ध हैं, उनको वहाँ से खदेड़ा जा रहा है। मेरा प्रश्न है कि क्या उनको मालूम है कि जो रॉगियो रिफ्यूजीस हैं, जो बर्मा से आए हैं, उनको वहाँ पर बसाया जा रहा है और इसके साथ ही सारी मशीनरी और मिलट्री के लोग भी जो वहाँ चकमा वापिस जाते हैं उनको खदेड़ते हैं? क्या यह सच नहीं है? ऐसी स्थिति में उनसे समस्याओं की चर्चा करने के बाद क्या फल निकलेगा? दूसरी ओर आपका खयाल यह है कि आपने त्रिपुरा की सरकार को कह दिया है कि 1 जनवरी, 1993 के बाद आप कोई सहायता उनको नहीं देंगे। तो मेरा प्रश्न यह है कि क्या यह हालात जानते हुए भी कि वहाँ की बंगला देश की सरकार बड़ी मुश्किल से राजी हुई है बात करने के लिए, यह कोई खुशी का मौका नहीं है। लेकिन उनकी जो असली नीयत है, उसको दर्शाता है। तो क्या वहाँ पर रॉगियो रि-होबिलेट हो रहे हैं? उन्होंने माना है कि हम उनको वहाँ रि-होबिलेट नहीं करेंगे। पोलिटिकल कमिटी की बात कही है, तो पोलिटिकल कमिटी क्या करना चाहती है और आप जनवरी, 1993 से सहायता क्यों बंद कर रहे हैं?

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO : Sir, help is not being stopped from January. As I said, we have recognised these people as refugees.

As far as the political committee, which has been mentioned by the hon. Member is concerned, I may add that this is an all-party, multi-party political committee. The political committee appointed by the Bangladesh Government consists of Members of Parliament belonging to the different political parties there. They are having talks, discussions, with the Chakma organisations, including those which are within our territory. These talks are going on. There have been a few rounds of talks and these are proceeding.

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद भाथुर : इन्होंने कहा है कि हम जनवरी, 1993 से सरकार की मदद नहीं करेंगे।

The Central Government has intimated the Tripura Government that from 1st January, 1993, the Central Government would stop the aid.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO : I have already answered this. In regard to those who are refugees, we have certain obligations towards them. We will fulfil those obligations towards these refugees.

श्री दिव्यु कान्त शाल्मी : माननीय सभापति जी, मुझे एक निवेदन करने की आज्ञा दी जाए।

MR. CHAIRMAN : I am sorry. If you will excuse me, I find that, already, there is a lot of frustration in the House, particularly, among backbenchers. They want that more questions should be covered in the Question Hour. We have taken more than fifteen minutes on this question. May I, therefore, go on to Question No. 42?

उर्वरकों पर राज-सहायता में वृद्धि

*42. श्री राम जेठमलानी :

डा. जिनेंद्र कुमार जैन :

क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या 1991-92 में उर्वरकों पर दी गई राज-सहायता की राशि की तुलना में 1992-93 में दी जाने वाली राज-सहायता की राशि में वृद्धि की गई है,

(ख) यदि हाँ, तो कितनी,

(ग) क्या चालू वित्त वर्ष के दौरान उर्वरकों पर राज-सहायता की राशि, उच्च प्रयोजनार्थ 1992-93 के बजट में उपलब्ध करायी गयी राशि से अधिक हो जाने की संभावना है,

(घ) यदि हाँ, तो उसके क्या कारण हैं;

(ङ) क्या सरकार ने चालू वर्ष के दौरान राज-सहायता की राशि में कमी करने के लिए कोई कदम उठाए थे;

सिभा में यह प्रश्न श्री राम जेठमलानी द्वारा पूछा गया