

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: He completely sidetracked the issue. I referred to the cases where the State Governments took disciplinary actions against certain Officers for their inefficiency or for their lack of integrity. Such Officers were immediately taken to the Centre and given postings here to undermine the disciplinary actions taken by the State Government. That was the point which I mentioned.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI: Some State Governments take very peculiar decisions. Sometimes they retire a vast number of officials and then they re-employ a vast number of them. When there is an election. Then they take other actions. There take a decision to subvert the very election. They they take other actions. There are some basic tenets according to which we work. There are some basic procedures. We cannot allow such random actions by the State Governments to distort the whole procedure and the system as it has been running.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will take up questions Nos. 266 and 267 together on the condition that Shri Meena will have only one Supplementary. Is Shri Meena here? No, he is not here. So, I will take up only Q. No. 266.

Statement of Sri Lankan Minister on the India's initiative for peace talks

*266. **PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA:** Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Sri Lankan National Security Minister is reported to have stated that any initiative for resumption of peace talks between the Sri Lankan Government and the Tamil groups should come from New Delhi; and

(b) if so, what is the reaction of the Government of India in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government of India have kept open their good offices to the Government of Sri Lanka to continue negotiations with the Sri Lanka Tamil groups. Government are however of the view that negotiations cannot be conducted in an atmosphere of violence and killing of innocent civilians.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: The hon. Minister's answer to the question at part (b) is very blank. It is blank in the sense that "the Government have kept open their good offices to the Government of Sri Lanka to continue negotiations with the Sri Lanka Tamil groups." It further states: "Government are, however, of the view that negotiations cannot be conducted in an atmosphere of violence and killing of innocent civilians."

While the reply has been so blank, some of the actions taken by the Government appear to be a little strong, especially when one reads on a particular morning that the visit of the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Bhambhani, has been cancelled; that the visit of the Cricket team to Ceylon has been cancelled, etc.

In view of this, I would like to ask the Minister specifically whether the good offices which have been kept at the disposal of the Sri Lanka Government to have negotiations with the Tamil groups, will be available only when the atmosphere of violence and killing of innocent civilians has been warded off i.e. the good offices will be available only when the hostilities like bombarding of the civilian areas in Eastern and Northern Sri Lanka are stopped by the Sri Lanka Government. It appears the Sri Lanka Government not only considers the Tamil* as the enemies of the state, but even the innocent people of North as well as Eastern Sri Lanka as the enemies of the State. Therefore, I would like to ask specifically the Minister whether these good offices will be available for negotiations between the Sri Lanka Government and the Tamil groups only when the hostilities have been stopped.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member used the word Tamil** which will be omitted from the records.

SHRI K.R.NARAYANAN: Sir, first of all, on a point of fact our Foreign Secretary's visit to Sri Lanka has not been cancelled. It has been only postponed and our good offices remain. It is quite true we took the position that there must be substantial improvement in the atmosphere in Sri Lanka and also abatement in the violence that is going on there before we can meaningfully activate our good offices. It does not mean that we have taken a dogmatic position that all that is happening in Sri Lanka should stop absolutely before we can engage in offering our good offices. If we come to the conclusion that offering our good offices would lead to the ending of violence—if that is our appreciation, then, we are prepared to offer our good offices. But certainly such good offices cannot be really useful and constructive unless there is a lowering or relaxation of the atmosphere of hatred and violence that at present exists in Sri Lanka.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Second supplementary.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: The Minister has stated that good offices are available, however, the hostilities have to be stopped. In view of this has the Government retraced the steps from the statement made by the Minister for External Affairs, Mr. Bhagat, that there has to be a time framework for the settlement of the disputes between the Tamil groups and Sri Lanka. If that is the case, has it been a step backward in the policy adopted by the Government of India?

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN: Well, I do not think it is so. When you say 'a time framework' no time was exactly prescribed. It meant really that the problem must be brought to a solution within a reasonable time. You cannot have this

going on endlessly. There must be an end to violence. Certainly it is reasonable to conclude that with the intensification of violence which has taken place in Sri Lanka, we cannot continue meaningful discussions.

SHRI VISHWA BANDHU GUPTA: Sir, we have been dealing with this problem for quite sometime. It looks as if the solution is not yet ready at hand. Is the Minister aware that the Sri Lanka media, electronic as well as newspaper media has been playing a very negative role in this matter? Has there been some effort on our part to counteract this situation?

SHRI K.R.NARAYANAN: Sir, we are aware that the media in Sri Lanka has been taking an unhelpful stand on this and we are trying our best to correct the false impression created in India, Sri Lanka and abroad through our own publicity agency. We have expressed our position emphatically in the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva. That is heard by all the world.

श्री बी० सत्यनारायण रेड्डी : मि० चैयरमैन सर, आज के समाचारपत्रों में यह खबर छपी है, लंदन बेस्ड समाचार-पत्र के अनुसार, कि राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा मंत्री, श्रीलंका और वहां के जो तमिल नेता हैं, उनके बीच गुप्त तरीके से कुछ बातचीत हो रही है इस समस्या को सुलझाने के लिए।

क्या भारत सरकार को इस संबंध में कुछ जानकारी है और अगर जानकारी है, तो क्या भारत सरकार, जो पहले उन्होंने लिखा है, उसका वह स्वागत करेगी और इसमें मदद करेगी।

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN: Sir, we are aware that some talks and conversations have been taking place. But as the hon. Member himself says they are 'secret talks'. We cannot, therefore, divulge what exactly has happened. But we certainly approve of and we encourage any sort of dialogue that is taking place for the solution of this tragic problem.

*Expunged by order of the chair.

SHRI S.W. DHABE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the other aspect of this problem is that about 90 to 1000 Indian fishermen were killed when they went in trawlers for fishing. May I know from the Minister at least they have got responsibility to protect our citizens—as to what action they have taken with the Sri Lanka Government in respect of those Indian fishermen who are killed when they are fishing in the sea?

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN: Sir, we are taking every step possible for protecting our fishermen in these waters. If any of these incidents takes place outside our territorial waters, we cannot protect them by the use of our navy...

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: It is within our own territorial waters (*Interruptions*)

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN: If it is in our own territory, we certainly protect ourselves, but in that vast sea, if a fishing vessel goes, we cannot protect every inch of water there...

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: What for you are having your Navy!

SHRI S.W. DHABE: I have asked, what action you have taken against Sri Lanka in this matter. Have you written to them?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Thangabalu.

SHRI THANGABAALU: Sir, I do appreciate the sentiments expressed by the Government in not sending the Indian cricket team to Sri Lanka at this juncture where Tamil people are being butchered and killed daily. Our hon. Prime Minister expressed his hope and desire to help the Tamil people for a permanent solution. But our hon. Minister of External Affairs in his statement the other day stated that within a month's time, it will be settled and when we asked him, he said, "We want to give a time-frame to the Sri Lankan Government." But the Sri Lankan Government is taking undue advantage of the time and arming itself to kill the Tamils in that island. At this juncture, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government will come forward

with a time-bound programme. And I would urge the hon. Prime Minister to give an ultimatum to Sri Lanka to come to a political settlement. This is the only way to solve the problem. What is the reaction of the Government in this regard?

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN: Sir, the Government policy is to take all measures that are effective in solving this problem, and I would humbly submit that giving an ultimatum is not an effective method of solving this problem.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Maran.

SHRI R. MOHANARANGAM: Sir..

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have to give a chance to Members who have not put a question—first preference to them.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: Sir, the hon. Minister has stated that first hostilities should stop and violence should end before any meaningful negotiations can be conducted. I would like to know from the hon. Minister when the hostilities will stop and when the violence will end. This is a very important question. If we expect violence to stop on its own, it is just like King Canute expecting the waves of the ocean to subside. Violence will stop only after all the Tamils are exterminated. Now genocide is going on. Perhaps Sri Lanka is the only country in the world which kills its own citizens by aerial bombing. Sir, leaving alone controversial things like Eelam and merger of the northern and eastern parts, there are certain things which have been accepted unanimously by all the parties concerned as for example, cease-fire and secondly, monitoring of the cease-fire by a committee. So I would like to know from the hon. Minister what India has done to implement those programmes which have been accepted unanimously. Secondly, recently the hon. Prime Minister has stated in a press interview that the Sri Lankan Government should talk to the Tamils directly. Has India abandoned its office of mediation because it has realised that it is an exercise in futility? Is there any change of policy?

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN: Sir, as regards the Prime Minister's statement I

want to say that the ideal situation is really when the Sri Lankan authorities and the Tamil organisations talk to each other directly. But since they don't do that, we have offered our good offices in order to enable them ultimately to meet each other to reduce the gulf between the two parties and to come to a political settlement. As regards when the violence will cease, I cannot predict. But I can say this that it is not in the interest of the Sri Lankan Government to continue this sort of indiscriminate violence. It is against their interests. And secondly...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Taking over of M/s. Metcoke Pvt. Ltd. by the West Bengal Finance Corporation

*262. SHRI NATHA SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has drawn to a news item which appeared in the Business Standard, Calcutta of 22nd November, 1985 that a running small scale industry M/s Metcoke Pvt. Ltd, Calcutta functioning on the know-how supplied by the National Research and Development Corporation was taken over by the West Bengal Finance Corporation;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard and what action the Central Government had taken to restore the company to the management;

(c) whether the West Bengal Finance Corporation suppressed the fact about their taking over the unit while communicating to the Central Government about their action in respect of the unit;

(d) if so, what action was taken in this regard; and

(e) whether the West Bengal Finance Corporation which were created under the Central law have been given powers to take over running units?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Department of Scientific and Industrial Research of the Government of India (DSIR), and the National Research Development Corporation (NRDC) a public sector corporation of the DSIR, have given substantial support of M/s Metcoke Pvt. Ltd., Calcutta consistently over an extended period. When the promoters of the M/s Metcoke Pvt. Ltd. were found in late 1979 to be facing difficulties in realising products of acceptable quality and in running the plant at its rated capacity, NRDC brought in a reputed consultancy company to review the project and identify measures for solving its problems. Based on the recommendations of that consultant, NRDC then sanctioned the company with a developmental loan of Rs. 3.7 lakhs in January, 1980. Then, in January 1985, NRDC set off the repayment of the principal of that loan and the interest thereon against technical services to be provided by M/s Metcoke to subsequent licensees of NRDC then sanctioned the company with September, 1985 a high level meeting was convened by DSIR with IDBI, IRBI, West Bengal Finance Corporation, United Bank of India and SAIL. This meeting established the soundness of the technology as practiced by M/s Metcoke and the conformity of the quality of the smokeless fuel produced by the plant to the requisite technical and user standards. However, due to the large outstandings of around Rs. 91 lakhs by way of loans from public financial institutions and banks and interest thereon, and their strong reservations about the managerial competence of the promoter directors, the financial institutions have not been willing to provide the additional funds of around Rs. 25 lakhs sought by the promoter directors to rehabilitate the company.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Yes, Sir.