

RAJYA SABHA

Friday, the 30th July, 1982/8:1
 Sravana, 1904 (Saka)

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

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

*301. [The questioner (Shri
 Gannathrao Joshi) was absent.
 For answer vide Col 36 to 41 infra]

Indian nationals killed and captured
 in Israel during Israel-PLO conflict

Q2. SHRI BISWA GOSWAMI:†
 SHRI SATYA PAL
 MALIK:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL
 AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in
 the recent Israel-PLO conflict
 several Indian nationals working
 in Lebanon were killed and cap-
 tured by Israel; and

(b) if so, what are the details
 in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTER-
 NAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V.
 NARASIMHA RAO): (a) and
 (b) Four Indian nationals have
 been killed.

Reports indicate that a few In-
 dians are in Israeli captivity along
 with several others of different
 nationalities. However, due to
 prevailing conditions, it has not
 been possible to confirm these re-
 ports.

The Embassy has been instruc-
 ted by the Government of India
 to give all possible assistance. The
 Embassy is in close touch with
 the International Red Cross au-
 thorities who had earlier alerted
 their units regarding the safety of
 Indian nationals.

†The question was actually ask-
 ed on the floor of the House by
 Shri Biswa Goswami.

SHRI BISWA GOSWAMI: Sir,
 the hon. Minister has said that
 four Indians have been killed and
 several others are in Israeli cap-
 tivity. Sir, I want to know from
 the hon. Minister as to the circum-
 stances under which these
 Indians were killed and
 the concrete steps the Govern-
 ment has taken for the release of
 those who are still in captivity.
 And why were they arrested?

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO:
 Sir, some newspapers, including
 the Indian Express of July 3,
 carried reports based on informa-
 tion disclosed by a Canadian na-
 tional that an unspecified num-
 ber of Asians, including Indians,
 were among those imprisoned in
 Sidon, South Lebanon by Israelis
 and severely beaten. However,
 the reports stated: "There were
 not so many from India". On
 July 3, the spokesman of this
 Ministry told newsmen that the
 Government of India had noted
 this report with considerable dis-
 tress and the Indian diplomatic
 mission in the area had been ask-
 ed to confirm whether in fact any
 Indians had been maltreated by
 Israelis. Our Embassy in Beirut
 has since reported that out of ap-
 proximately 150 Indians in South
 Lebanon, 72 are working in dif-
 ferent factories. According to the
 information available with them,
 out of 40 who were arrested, 13
 have since been released and are
 working in Sidon. 27 are still
 under detention. The whereabouts
 of another 32 are not immediately
 known to the Embassy and the
 conditions there being what they
 are. It is not possible for the em-
 bassy to trace each and every in-
 dividual in spite of all the efforts;
 and efforts are still going on.

SHRI BISWA GOSWAMI: Why
 were they arrested?

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO:
 They were not arrested for anyth-

ing. They were in the area and they were taken into custody as everybody else has been taken into custody. How do we know why they have been arrested? This is not available with us. When a war is on, some people found in the area are put under detention and later released.

SHRI BISWA GOSWAMI:
Sir. . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have already asked two questions.

SHRI R. R. MORARKA: No, only one question he has asked.

SHRI BISWA GOSWAMI: I want to know whether the Government have taken serious note of it. I want to know also whether there has been a shift in its policy towards Israel which can be found from the decision of the Asiad Committee which says that Israelis would not be invited to the Asiad because the Israeli sportsmen cannot be given protection. This is the only reason it has no other reason that Israel would not be invited. We have not taken any strong action.

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO: Let us confine ourselves to the question. We have taken immediate steps to trace the whereabouts of these persons. I have given the number of persons whose whereabouts have been traced, others have not been traced, but we are in close touch with the International Red Cross through whom we function. We have no diplomatic relations directly with Israel. So we could not possibly have gone to them. The only link between them and us is the International Red Cross and they are doing their best. We have not only approached the International Red Cross in Beirut, we have also approached the International Red

Cross in Geneva from here. They have given instructions to their unit in Beirut and everything that is possible in the circumstances is being done.

श्री संयुक्त सिद्धि रजी : मान्यवर, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहूंगा कि भारतीय निवासियों के खिलाफ इजराइल के दूत जिस तरह का दुर्व्यवहार कर रहे हैं, क्या उसकी वजह यह नहीं है कि भारत का जो स्टैंड इजराइल के खिलाफ है, उस स्टैंड से पीड़ित होकर भारतीय नागरिकों के खिलाफ विशेष तौर पर जो वहां पर है, इस किस्म की हरकतें हो रही हैं और दूसरे देश के नागरिकों के खिलाफ इस किस्म की हरकतें नहीं हो रही हैं बल्कि भारत-वासियों पर अपने गुस्से का इजहार करने के लिए जो भारत ने इजराइल के खिलाफ किया है, इस किस्म की हरकतों की जा रही है ? क्या सरकार इस किस्म की हरकतों को रोकने के लिए कोई उपाय कर रही है ?

श्री पी० वी० नरसिंह राव : मान्यवर, जो आज हम सोच रहे हैं कि यह सब हो रहा है, हमारे पास इसके फैक्ट्स नहीं हैं जिनके आधार पर यह समझे कि यह सब सचमुच हो रहा है। एक अखबार में खबर निकली और एक कैंनेडियन ने कहा, उसका यहां उद्धरण दिया गया। हम पता लगाने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं कि हालात क्या हैं। आप जानते हैं कि यह इतना आसान नहीं है। हो सकता है कि उनका गम और गुस्सा जो भी हम पर है, उसके मद्देनजर वह इस तरह का बर्ताव कर रहे हों, लेकिन हमारे पास जो भी फैक्ट्स हैं उनके आधार पर यह पक्की बात नहीं लगती।