

negotiations and to regulate them keeping in mind the overall interests of the country. If we get requests from the State Governments, they are decided on merits. I am not in a position to say at the moment how many requests we have received and from which Governments.

SHRI KHURSHED ALAM KHAN: There are a number of experts attach--ed to our various Embassies and High •Commissions. If Ministers from various States start going abroad to explore the possibilities of collaboration, then what will these experts do in our Embassies and High Commissions? Therefore, will the Government decide to withdraw these technical experts since most of the Ministers would like to go themselves?

SHRI BIJU PATNAIK: They will assist them.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: We do have experts in our Embassies abroad, and if a delegation goes there, the services of those experts are available to that delegation. There is no proposal to withdraw such experts.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: The honourable Minister could have just as well said that he has been following in this matter the practice under the previous regime when various State Governments had sent their representatives to Japan and other countries also. Perhaps our friends there have forgotten that having come to the Opposition Benches. The West Bengal Government should be congratulated on having taken the initiative in the preliminary stage to have negotiations for the development of this project. It is even done sometimes at private level by various States. Very rightly my friend there has pointed out that if the Birlas can do it, why not the States? Birlas are not certainly more important than a State of the Indian Union. Therefore, I would like to liave a very clear policy. Certainly.

the Government Of India did the correct thing. The| initiative of the States for good causes, specially for the development of such projects as Haldia, should be encouraged by the Government of India. And it is good he has done it. It is also division of labour. Shri Vajpayee is busy. He will be the observer in Haryana on the 8th of May. To some extent, he is relieved of his job.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: He did not put any question.

MR. CHAIRMAN;; He suggested something to you.

AN HON. MEMBER: He congratulated the Minister.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: The policy of the Central Government is to encourage initiative.

SHRI PILOO MODY: His assignment in Haryana is a foreign assignment.

### Issue of Passports

\*243. SHRIMATI HAMIDA HABI-BULLAH:

SHRI GURUDEV GUPTA:f

SHRI PRAKASH MEHROTRA:

SHRI SAWAISINGH SISO-DIA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision to issue diplomatic passports to public men keeping in view their present status and part background; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

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†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Gurudev Gupta.

**विदेश मंत्री—(श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी :** (क) पासपोर्ट अधिनियम, 1967 के अन्तर्गत बनाए पासपोर्ट नियमों में दूसरी बातों के अलावा ऐसे व्यक्ति को राजनयिक पासपोर्ट प्रदान करने की व्यवस्था है जिसको राजनयिक का दर्जा प्राप्त हो या जिसे विदेश में निश्चित कार्य की प्रकृति के कारण अथवा उसकी अपनी हैसियत की वजह से राजनयिक का दर्जा दिया गया हो, जिसका निर्णय केन्द्रीय सरकार करती है।

(ख) राज्य के उच्च पदों पर काम करने वाले व्यक्तियों को अथवा ऐसे व्यक्तियों को विदेश यात्रा पर जाते समय राजनयिक पासपोर्ट दिए जाते हैं जो उच्च पदों पर काम करते रहे हों।

कतिपय वर्गों के व्यक्तियों को सरकारी काम से विदेश यात्रा पर जाते समय राजनयिक पासपोर्ट दिए जाते हैं जैसे—उच्च न्यायालयों के मुख्य न्यायाधीश, विधान परिषदों के सभापति, विधान सभाओं के अध्यक्ष, राज्यों के मंत्रिमंडल के सदस्य आदि। संसद् सदस्यों को भारत सरकार के काम से विदेश यात्रा पर जाते समय अथवा संसदीय प्रतिनिधिमंडल के रूप में विदेश जाते समय राजनयिक पासपोर्ट दिए जाते हैं।

7 [THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAJEE): (a) The Passports Rules, made under the Passport Act, 1967, inter alia, provide for the grant of a diplomatic passport to a person having, or having been granted, a diplomatic status, either because of the nature of his foreign mission or because of the position he holds, as may be determined by the Central Government.

(b) Persons holding High Offices of State or who have held high offices are given diplomatic passports when they travel abroad.

Certain categories of persons are given diplomatic passports when they

† [ ] English translation.

travel abroad on business of Government, e.g. Chief Justice of High Courts, Chairman of Legislative Councils, Speakers of Legislative Assemblies, Cabinet Ministers of States. etc. Members of Parliament travelling abroad on the business of the Government of India or as Members of Parliamentary Delegations are given diplomatic passports.]

**श्री गुरुदेव गुप्त :** श्रीमन्, मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहूंगा कि अप्रैल, 1977 से मार्च, 1978 तक कितने-कितने सार्वजनिक कार्यक्रमों को राजनयिक पासपोर्ट दिए गए हैं, उनका सम्बन्ध किस राजनयिक दल से है और कितने लोगों को यह स्वीकृत किए गए हैं, तथा राजनयिक पासपोर्ट देने का उनका काइटीरिया अथवा आधार क्या है?

**श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी :** सभापति महोदय, राजनयिक पासपोर्ट देने के सम्बन्ध में कुछ नियम 1976 में बने थे, वर्तमान सरकार ने उन नियमों में अभी तक कोई परिवर्तन नहीं किया है। हम परिवर्तन करने का विचार कर रहे हैं। अगर माननीय सदस्यों के कोई सुझाव हों, तो उनका स्वागत किया जाएगा। 1977 और 1978 के बीच जिन गैर सरकारी व्यक्तियों को राजनयिक पासपोर्ट दिए गए, उनके नाम मेरे पास हैं। 1977 में श्री जे० आर० डी० टाटा जो एयर-इण्डिया के चेयरमैन थे, श्री अशोक मेहता जो लागूंस में रंगभेद के खिलाफ विश्व सम्मेलन में भारतीय प्रतिनिधि मंडल के अध्यक्ष थे, श्री इन्द्रजीत जो पत्रकार हैं और युनाइटेड नेशंस के भारतीय प्रतिनिधि मंडल के सदस्य थे, श्री जे० डी० सेठा जो युनाइटेड नेशंस के प्रतिनिधि मंडल में शामिल थे, प्रो० मिस जहानआरा बेगम जो हज डेलिगेशन की सदस्य होकर विदेश यात्रा पर गई थीं, श्रीमती आबिदा अहमद जो भूतपूर्व राष्ट्रपति श्री फखरुद्दीन अली अहमद की पत्नी हैं। 1978 में 6 व्यक्तियों को राजनयिक पासपोर्ट दिया गया।

MR. CHAIRMAN; You need not read out all the names.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: No, it is very important.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You must respect the person who put the supplementary.

He wanted the total number.

SHRI PILOO MODY: The next man also will ask the same question.

**श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी :** मोडुडीन हरिस जो हज कमेटी के चेयरमैन हैं और विदेश यात्रा पर प्रतिनिधि-मण्डल के नेता होकर गये थे, सरदार स्वर्ण सिंह, श्रीमती चरण कौर जो सरदार स्वर्ण सिंह की पत्नी है, श्री दिनेश सिंह और उनकी पत्नी और श्री डी० आर० मनोकर जो कोआर्डिनेटिंग कमेटी आफ दि नान-अलाइड व्यूरो के चेयरमैन हैं ।

**श्री गुरुदेव गुप्त :** मैंने पहले पूछा था कि क्या कोई ऐसे लोग हैं जिनको राजनयिक पासपोर्ट देना अस्वीकृत किया गया है। यह मेरा पहला प्रश्न था। उसका उत्तर अभी आना बाकी है।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Put your supplementary now.

SHRI GURUDEV GUPTA: May I know who the persons are who have applied for such passports and who have been refused such passports?

**श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी :** किसी को पासपोर्ट देना मना नहीं किया जा सकता।

**श्री गुरुदेव गुप्त :** किया जा सकता है यह तो ठीक है। लेकिन मेरा प्रश्न यह था कि—  
Has it been refused?

**श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी :** गुरुदेव जी के मन में जो बात है वह जरा साफ साफ पूछ लें। . . .

(Interruptions)

**श्री गुरुदेव गुप्त :** आप जानते हैं तो आप बता दें तो ज्यादा अच्छा होगा।

**श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी :** समाप्ति महोदय, जहां तक पासपोर्ट देने का सम्बन्ध है . . .

(Interruptions)

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI: Sir, are we to understand that the Foreign Minister has got something in his mind which is also in common with this?

MR. CHAIRMAN: How can you know that?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Sh<sup>^</sup> he is serving as the link between two minds.

SHRI PILOO MODY: His is the missing mind.

**श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी :** समाप्ति महोदय, अगर कोई विशिष्ट व्यक्ति के बारे में प्रश्न पूछा जाए तो मैं उत्तर दे सकता हूं। मेरे पास ऐसे सब लोगों की सूची नहीं है जिन्हें पासपोर्ट देने से मना किया गया है। कानून के अनुसार जिन लोगों के खिलाफ कोर्ट में क्रिमिनल केसेज पड़े हुए हैं उन्हें पासपोर्ट देने से मना किया जा सकता है।

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is all. Mr. Mehrotra. Not here. Mr. Sisodia. Not here. Yes, Mr. Kulkarni.

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI: Sir, the honourable Minister has mentioned the criteria governing the issue of passports laid down in 1976. He has stated that for the Members of Parliament, if they are going as the representatives of the Government or on some parliamentary committees, there is no difficulty. I do not know whether I am right. I want to know whether the Government will reconsider and review the position. Sir, the Members of Parliament, when they go abroad, they have

to go not only for these two purposes that I mentioned, but also for other purposes, because they are expected to participate in various conferences on their own or to participate in some discussions on industrial matters. I would like to know whether the Government would review the position.

DR. RAFIQ ZAKARIA: Why industrial matters? Academic matters also are there.

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI: Yes. So many things are there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Kulkarni, please resume your seat.

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI: I have not yet completed my question, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Then, why are you discussing with another Member?

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI: He came in between.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Then, why should you reply to him? You put your supplementary.

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI: My second question is about the last part of the reply which he gave to the previous hon'ble Member. I want to know whether passports are denied to those persons against whom criminal cases are being instituted and, if so, whether the offences like economic offences and even the • offences connected with the emergency or some such thing are also included. What is the criterion?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Sir, so far the practice has been that if the Members of Parliament go abroad for private work, they are not given diplomatic passports.

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI: They should be.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I have been a Member of Parliament for twenty years and I was never given a diplomatic passport.

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI: No, I am requesting you to give.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Please let me complete. Now, if my friends want that the entire matter should be reconsidered I am willing to do so.

SHRI N. G. RANGA: That is right.

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI : Sir, he has avoided replying to the second part of my question, which is more important.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He has already replied.

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI : He has not replied. Along with criminals will persons concerned with emergency excesses also be denied passports? What is the reply of the Government to this?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That supplementary will not arise.

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI: Why not?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is my decision: if you ask, why not? The question is a limited one. You must know it and you must read it.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I am glad that the matter has come up...

(Interruptions)

SHRI N. K. P. SALVE: Is it the prerogative of only a few to ask questions? The same people are asking again and again.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am giving you also an opportunity. Whosoever raises his hand, gets an opportunity.

SHRI N. K. P. SALVE: I could not ' catch your eye.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: The hon. Minister has already said that he would consider the matter and that the matter requires reconsideration. In.

some countries I find that Members of Parliament are given diplomatic passport as they call it whatever it means and whatever it implies. Sir, in our country it is not done at all. He has been here for 20 years; I have been here for 26 years. I have also not got it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Both of you are in the same category.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: But the position is that Mr. J. R. D. Tata can get a diplomatic passport because he has 900 crores of rupees of assets, and Bhupesh Gupta or somebody else would not get it because he has not got even ten thousand rupees. There is no rule behind it. There is discretion, arbitrariness.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: No, no.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: They are parts of the vested interests. Their wives are parts of vested interests. Therefore, may I ask the Government whether the Government will consider the advisability of changing the rule in such a manner that the diplomatic passport is available to such people who are eminent in public life? I am not talking only of Members of Parliament: an eminent scientist can get it. Therefore, Sir, the matter should be reconsidered from that angle. I do hope that Mr. Vajpayee would go into this question instead of reading out the list. The list has condemned the Government.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I would like to state that no partiality has been shown to Mr. Tata. He was given a diplomatic passport under the rules framed in 1976. According to these rules, heads of public corporations or undertakings are entitled to have diplomatic passports.

So far as the question of wives is concerned, we both are bachelors and we should not meddle with affairs with which we are not directly concerned..

(Interruptions)

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: But with one difference, Sir. And Mr. Vajpayee knows the difference... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Both of you know each other.

SHRI N. K. P. SALVE: In reply to one of the supplementaries, the distinguished Minister of External Affairs stated that in respect of such citizens against whom criminal cases have been filed, it is open to the Government to refuse a passport. May I know from the Minister, Sir, if this rule is not to be exercised arbitrarily, capriciously and at the private whims and fancies of either bureaucrats or of politicians, are there any criteria laid down by which you will refuse this in certain circumstances? As the Minister knows, hundreds and hundreds of persons who are prosecuted for criminal and economic offences are getting ordinary passports without the slightest impediment. That is question No. 1. Second, Sir, is whether there are applications pending, of persons who are very well placed in Government and who enjoy a political stature not only in the politics of this country but in world politics. Is it that the Government is worried in respect of such applications about the criminal cases having been filed without their being any objections from the court? (Time bell rings). If such is the position, is it fair on the part of the Government to withhold issuing the passports?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I am very happy to see my friend. Mr. Salve, back in Parliament and putting questions, although our roles have been reversed and I am at the receiving end. Sir, in regard to the persons against whom criminal cases are pending in a court of law, the Government would not like to come in the way. So far as I am concerned, I have insisted that if such persons are allowed by the court concerned, they should be permitted to go abroad.

DR. RAFIQ ZAKARIA: I would like to know from the hon. Minister what

is the difference between a diplomatic passport and an ordinary passport. I have been the holder of both the passports. Apart from being a status symbol and apart from the facilities that one may get as Minister, I do not think there is any difference. But I would, like to be enlightened on that. Secondly, Sir, if diplomatic passports could be given to Ministers, State Ministers and heads of statutory corporations, then I do not see any reason why the Minister should only give the assurance of considering it in the case of Members of Parliament who certainly are the representatives of the sovereign will of the people and why he should not give a categorical assurance that they would certainly get diplomatic passports.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Sir, there are three categories of passports, ordinary, official and diplomatic. Apart from the fact that the colours are different, I do not think there is any material difference.

DR. RAFIQ ZAKARIA: If you get it, won't you like to have it?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Now, you will like to have it. But when you were getting, I did not get.

DR. RAFIQ ZAKARIA: I was aware of what I was and you are aware of what you are.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: It is a wrong impression that a person holding a diplomatic passport will not be liable to prosecution. The only difference is that when the prosecution is started, the Indian Mission will be informed. Regarding the question of giving diplomatic passports to Members of Parliament, I have given an assurance that the suggestion will be considered. I am inclined to agree with my friend, Dr. Zakaria, that diplomatic passport is more of a status symbol.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Certain courtesies are shown in foreign countries.

MR. CHAIRMAN; Next question.

#### **Surcharge of unpaid telephone bills**

\*244. SHRI SAWAISINGH  
SISODIA:†

SHRIMATI HAMIDA  
HABIBULLAH:

SHRI GURUDEV GUPTA:

SHRI PRAKASH MEHROTRA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any suggestions for imposing a surcharge on telephone bills which remains unpaid to check accumulation of arrears; and

(b) if so, what action Government have taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI NARHARI PRASAD SUKHDEO SAI): (a) Yes, Sir. The P.C.A. in its 71st report (6th Lok Sabha) presented to Lok Sabha on 17-4-1978 has recommended that the feasibility of imposition of a surcharge over the telephone bills at the rate of 5 per cent or so may be examined where payments of the bills are not made by the scheduled dates.

(b) This will be examined.

SHRI SAWAISINGH SISODIA: Sir, the PAC has since given its recommendation. There are many troubles being experienced by the persons who hold the telephones because the bills sent are sometimes exaggerated and no notice is given before the disconnection is made. Therefore, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government is willing to agree to the PAC recommendations or whether they have any other suggestion before them in this connection.

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† The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Sawaisingh Sisodia.