

MATTERS RAISED WITH PERMISSION - *Contd.*

Abduction of two innocent Indians by the Talibans regime In Afganistan on the charges of being intelligence agents

SHRIMATI N. P. DURGA (Andhra Pradesh): Madam, the Talibans in Afghanistan abducted two Indians from a US-funded road project last Saturday. The two Indians are, unfortunately, from Nellore District of my State of Andhra Pradesh. The two Indians are Murali, a Lab Technician, and Varada Rao, a Plant Operator, who were working on the Kandahar-Kabul Road. The Talibans had branded them, without any basis, as 'Intelligence agents'. Mullah Sabir Momin, Dy. Operations Commander in the south of Afghanistan said that the Taliban would kill the two workers from India. He said that they would be killed at any cost. So, the time is running out, and there is no room for complacency. There have been threats even earlier from the Talibans, but the Government of Afghanistan has taken no precautionary measures. The Governor of the Province of Ghazni declared that they had captured the Talibanis who were behind the ambush and- killing of Pakistani engineers. But, alas! Nothing has been done so far as tracing of Indian workers is concerned. Hence, I request that the Government of India should act immediately, through the Indian Embassy in Kabul, and put pressure on the Afghan authorities to release the abducted Indian workers who hail from Andhra Pradesh.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY (Andhra Pradesh) :
Madam, this is an urgent issue..*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI N. JOTHI (Tamil Nadu) Madam, in Malaysia
also... *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI (Tamil Nadu): Madam, two persons have been arrested in Maldives and eight persons have been arrested in Malaysia. Indians hailing from different States of India are suffering in foreign countries. One is Afghanistan, another is Maldives and another is Malaysia. What I feel is that the Indian Embassies working in those countries must take it up very seriously. They should be told that the Members of Parliament are feeling hurt. They must take it up very seriously and see to it that Indians living abroad should not be subjected to harassment by those Governments. With these words, I associate myself with this Special Mention.

SHRI N. JOTHI: Madam, I am given to understand that in Malaysia, six people hailing from Tamil Nadu have been given death sentence. We don't know the reason for the death sentence. Like this, in Maldives, about 10 people have been given death sentence. These people go there for earning their livelihood. This is all happening, and I don't understand what the Government of India is doing in this matter. We have been appealing to the Government of India in this regard. Our Chief Minister has written letters to the Government of India, but, so far, no reply has been received. Their lives have to be saved. Some discussion is necessary on this issue. A mere mention or just making passing remarks on this issue is not enough. ...*(Interruptions)*...*No*, Madam, we should have a discussion on this issue in this Session itself. This is a very serious issue. Their lives have to be saved. They should take it up seriously.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You have made your point.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Just a second. Madam, we have submitted a representation to the hon. Prime Minister. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Nobody is taking it easily. We are taking it very seriously. It was not even listed. When Shrimati Durga came to me, I said, "Sure, I will allow you because it is a serious matter. And she has raised it. So, nobody is non-serious about the Indians in India or abroad.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Madam, this is a peculiar case in which four workers from Andhra Pradesh have been abducted by the Afghans. We have submitted a representation to the hon. Prime Minister and to the hon. Minister of External Affairs. This is an urgent matter. I request you to direct the Government to make a statement on this issue and see to it that their lives are saved. The family members of these poor people are in a tense situation. Look at it from the angle of those family members. This is an urgent issue. The Government should react immediately.

SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA (Andhra Pradesh) : Madam, nearly 400 persons are working there..*(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I will allow you. Let him finish first. ...*(Interruptions)*....

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI (Tamil Nadu) : Madam, practically the foreign Governments have taken us for granted, as far as Indians living in those countries are concerned. We have written letters to the hon. Minister of External Affairs in regard to fishermen. Our leader has also written a letter to the hon. Prime Minister. We want some sort of reaction from the Government of India. The Government of India should see to it that the Indians living abroad, who hail from different States of India, must be protected in a proper manner. I hope, you would direct the Government in this regard.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Sure.

DR. CHANDAN MITRA (Nominated): Madam, I think we should delink the issue of Afghanistan from the larger issue of treatment of Indian workers in other countries because this is a very serious matter and requires immediate attention. In view of the excellent relations between the Government in Kabul and our Government, I think it is very important that the Government of India should intervene immediately with the Government of President Karzai to ensure that some safety and security is provided to the Indian technicians and experts because a large number of them are going to Afghanistan and we are closely involved with the reconstruction work in Afghanistan. This will be a very big set back. Therefore, I request you to convey the sentiments of the Members of the House on this matter to the Minister of External Affairs. I also endorse the idea that we should have a discussion on this matter, as soon as possible.

SHRI N. JOTHI: There is no question of delinking...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: The Minister is responding.
...*(Interruptions)*... .

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Just a minute. There is no point in repeating it. Okay, the Government will respond. Let me add something to what is being said very rightly, the matter should be delinked. There are Indians who are working all over the world, whether it is in Malaysia or Indonesia or anywhere else, that is a different matter. That should also be taken up seriously. As far as the issue of fishermen is concerned, I had personally taken it up with the Minister for Ports, who came to call on me, and I had told you in the House. The matter of Afghanistan, where the workers are there, they have been abducted. We have very good relations

with the Government of Afghanistan, as mentioned in the House. I am sure the Government will take it up seriously. Now, let the Government react. ...*(Interruptions)*...Please sit down.

SHRI N. JOTHI: It is not about the fishermen's issue. In Malaysia, death sentence has been given to the people of Indian origin. ...*(Interruptions)*...Death sentence has been given in Maldives.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. You were not here. ...*(Interruptions)*...Please sit down. One second. I feel a good discussion, a good matter gets killed in this House because everybody wants to mix up the issues. The issue should be taken as it has come. Just getting up from your seats will not help. If you have to say anything about Maldives, please do that, and I have no objection. But let him first react to what is said. Listen first, have patience, please...*(Interruptions)*... I don't want to get angry because it kills me. I want you to listen to the Government.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): Madam, it is not correct to say that the Government is not serious on the issue. There are two issues that have been raised over here. One issue is regarding the treatment of Indians by some foreign Governments, especially the fishermen. This is an issue which should be discussed. The Government has no objection if the issue is properly framed, in whatever manner the Chairman feels. If a notice is given, the Government will have no objection in having a discussion on the matter. That is the first thing.

Secondly, about the urgent steps to be taken which some hon. Members said...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It relates to Afghanistan, the safety of Indian workers there.

SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL: I will immediately bring this matter to the notice of the Minister for External Affairs so that some steps are taken urgently... *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: They are going to hang Indians. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: If three people speak together, I can't understand. You decide amongst yourself who should speak on the issue

and then I will allow. If three people stand up and speak together, I will say 'okay, the Government will take action.' One Member should tell me what is it in Maldives.

SHRI P.G. NARAYANAN (Tamil Nadu): Madam, the urgency is, already death sentences have been passed. Before executing the death sentences, we have to do something. But the Government has to react to it.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Death sentence for what crime? If the person has committed a crime in a country which attracts the death sentence, that is a different matter. But somebody must tell me against what crime they have done like this.

SHRI P.G. NARAYANAN: They were charged for false offences. That is the reason.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: What is the crime? Have they framed any charges?

SHRI P.G. NARAYANAN: Nobody knows, but they are all false.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: If nobody knows, then you can't substantiate whether they are false or not. But it is for the Government to find out from the Maldives Government about the persons who have been prosecuted and death sentences are pronounced. It should find out on what charges they are prosecuted. If you don't know, we can't say anything.

SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL: Madam, we know about Afghanistan, but about Maldives, the present issue, the sense of grievance, the opinion expressed in this House will be conveyed to the Minister.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: The Government should issue a *suo motu* statement and take actions to see that they are not hanged. That is our request. As far as Malaysia is concerned, baseless charges have been framed against Indians.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Malaysia matter is settled. It was two months ago, and it is done now. I am aware of that. Now, the Minister is going to take note of it. Please have patience.

Now I adjourn the House till 2.30 p.m. for lunch.

The House then adjourned for lunch at thirty-four minutes past twelve of the clock.

The House reassembled after lunch at thirty-one minutes past two of the clock, THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

Remarks made by a Minister against top leadership of the Congress Party -
Contd.

कृषि और ग्रामीण उद्योग मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री संघ प्रिय गौतम) : बहुत-बहुत बधाई मैडम, कल के प्रोग्राम के लिए।

उपसभापति : शुक्रिया किसी चीज के लिए तो बधाई मिल रही है, वरना कोई बधाई देने के लिए तैयार ही नहीं है हम लोगों को।

श्री संघ प्रिय गौतम : रात इतने बढ़िया भाषण हुए।

श्री सुरेश पचौरी (मध्य प्रदेश) : मैडम।

उपसभापति : जी, बोलिए।

श्री सुरेश पचौरी : आज सुबह प्रश्नकाल के बाद विपक्ष के नेता आदरणीय मनमोहन सिंह जी ने कुछ बातें यहां सदन में उठाई थीं और यह चाहा था कि सरकार की प्रतिक्रिया उस संबंध में जानी जाए और आपने भी कुछ ऐसा संतव्य व्यक्त किया था और हम चाहेंगे कि सरकार की उस संबंध में क्या प्रतिक्रिया है जो बात उन्होंने काफी गंभीरता से उठाई थी। यदि वह प्रतिक्रिया आज नहीं है तो कब तक वे प्रतिक्रिया व्यक्त करने की स्थिति में होंगे, यह हम आपके जरिए सरकार से जानना चाहेंगे?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): Madam, it was made clear even on the day when the hon. Minister spoke that he did not intend anything against the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha. He only referred to the discussion that was there in the tape and which was shown on TV as spoken by the then Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh. He did not make any allegation at all. Therefore, to say that there were allegations or something very bad said about the respected Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha is not fair. It is not fair. And it is also not correct. This position has been made clear.

श्री संघ प्रिय गौतम (उत्तरांचल) : जब तक प्रतिक्रिया आए हम क्रिया शुरू कर दें।

श्रीमती सरला माहेश्वरी (पश्चिमी बंगाल) : क्रिया तो हो चुकी है।

श्री सुरेश पचौरी : मैडम, यदि हाउस की प्रोसिडिंग्स देखी जाएं, चूंकि आपने भी आसंदी से यही व्यक्त किया था कि हाउस की प्रोसिडिंग्स देखेंगे और हाउस की प्रोसिडिंग्स के पृष्ठ-499 पर देखा जाए तो यह बात स्पष्ट है कि उन्होंने जो बात कही थी वही इसमें आई है और हमने भी जो इस बात की पुष्टि की थी वह भी इससे उजागर हो गई है। यदि टेप भी सुना जाए तो उसमें भी इस बात की पुष्टि होती है। एक तो यह है। मैडम, प्रिंसीडेंस 1968