

pretext that they belong to Kashmir which is a disputed area. However, for the last thirty years, people of this area have been visiting Nanakana Sahib. But since the imposition of emergency there the Government of Pakistan are not allowing our Sikh pilgrims to visit the religious places there, particularly Nanakana Sahib. I would like to know the view of Central Government in this regard. The Government should try to solve this problem through International Fora so that atleast, our Sikh pilgrim could be allowed to visit Nanakana Sahib.

*(English)*

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV (Silchar) : Hon. Deputy Speaker Sir, we are glad that though our Prime Minister is very busy, he has visited northeastern States recently. Not only that, he has given a special package of Rs. 6100 crore or something to the people of the northeast. We are unlucky because we are from Barak Valley. We have not got anything except a railway line given by our Railway Minister in the Railway Budget.

But I had hoped that when we met the Prime Minister very recently, he would redress it. But one statement of the hon. Prime Minister has created a lot of unhappiness and confusion and also fear in the minds of the linguistic and religious minorities of Assam. The hon. Prime Minister has declared that they are going to repeal the IMDT Act. This IMDT Act is an Act which is not only to detect, delist or deport foreigners, but it is also a safety valve to protect the real citizens of India who are subject to harassment by the police.

15.00 hrs.

In any part of the country, if there is a foreigner, he is covered by the Foreigners Act, 1946. As per the Foreigners Act, 1946, the onus is on the person on whom the allegation is made to prove that he is not a foreigner, that he is an Indian. But under the IMDT Act, if an allegation is brought by a third party or by the Government, it is also their duty to prove that that person is a foreigner, that he has crossed over illegally, after 1971, without a passport, without a visa; or, if he had come in with a passport and a visa that he has been overstaying.

It also provides that once it is detected by the authorities, he or she would be deprived of becoming a voter for ten years from that date. Subsequently, they would be given nationality provided they fit into the other rules.

Now, I do not blame the Prime Minister. He was either wrongly briefed by his people or he was very keen to continue to get the support of the AGP, which is under pressure from the AASU which insists that the voters' list is not correct. Every time, they get elected with the help of a wrong voters list and they say that it is a wrong voters' list, that it must be reviewed and

recast. But they continue as MLAs and Ministers. This is the funniest part of it. We, the linguistic and religious minorities are subject to so much harassment because of such lists and the foreigners issue. We in the Congress party are totally committed in our stand that no foreigner who has come in after 1971 should stay in Assam, whether he is a Hindu or a Muslim. We have no objection but at the same time we are not willing to see that some instrument is given to the police authorities to harass.

In the past, when there was no Foreigners Act, no IMDT Act, even Assamese with Bhattacharjee, Dutta and Choudhury titles - which are also common among the Bengalis - were served with notices as foreigners. This is a fact. I am representing Assam in Parliament from the '80s. I would make a request to Shri Ram Vilas Paswan who has taken a special interest in the North-East. If there is any amendment to be made anywhere to give some help to the Administration or to the Tribunal, we can discuss that. We are not having a closed mind on that. But by repealing the Act itself or by making some major changes, the thrust of the IMDT Act should not in any way be adulterated. I want to make it clear that if you bring it, one hundred and forty Members of this Party will not vote for you. Our Party's Working Committee has taken the decision and we appeal to you.

I will not blame the Prime Minister. I have also been a Minister and I have also seen that sometimes officials wrongly brief Ministers. So, a similar situation might have arisen and we are ready to forget it. But let this not be pursued.

I am grateful to you for giving me a chance. There are allegations appearing in newspapers regarding Army excesses in Assam in finding out the terrorists. But terrorist activities must be stopped. Recently, Shri Adyani was also there in Assam. On both these issues, he and the Congress party have different views. But they have also said that harassment must be stopped. In the name of detecting ULFA, you should not harass the innocent citizens of the country. It is happening and it must be stopped. I would request Shri Paswan to have a discussion with the Minister of Home Affairs, who sometimes does not know the head or tail of it. He said the other day that it would be repealed and on the next day...*(Interruptions)* He was accompanying the Prime Minister. This is why I am saying this. He knows the North-East. I am sure he has not briefed the Prime Minister...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA (Ponnani) : Sir, I only support the views expressed by Shri Sontosh Mohan Dev...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Now, we are resuming discussion under Rule 193. Shri K.S.R. Murthy was on his legs.

*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please speak. What do you want to say?

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT (Nagpur) : The views of our party should also be included.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please speak. What do you want to say?

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : So far as the question of repatriation of foreigners is concerned, there is lack of will power. It is only the politics of vote. They should be repatriated. The hon'ble Prime Minister has said there...*(Interruptions)*

The view of our party should also be included. We all welcome the announcement made there by the hon'ble Prime Minister. The law...*(Interruptions)* What is the definition of foreigners in this nation?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : There will be no further discussion on this matter now.

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : What is the definition of foreigners in this country?...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Now you have completed your point.

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : No. No, you have not heard me fully. The definition of foreigners is the people who have migrated from Bangladesh or from Pakistan. The people living here are not foreigners. We are not against them but the people who came here from Bangladesh should be repatriated from here.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Well, this is what he told.

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : It concerns the country as a whole. We are not misguiding anyone. There could be no two opinion in this regard. We have a very clear opinion and anyone who is a foreigner should be repatriated from this country...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : It is a serious lapse. It should not be repealed...*(Interruptions)* This House is strongly opposed to repeal of the IMDT Act. This IMDT Act must never be repealed which was brought forward with a particular view...*(Interruptions)* Please allow me to say something.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You have already spoken.

[Translation]

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : Not a single foreigner will be allowed to live in India and they should be driven out.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Well, you have made your point now. What more would you like to say?

LT. GENERAL SHRI PRAKASH MANI TRIPATHI (Deoria) : We are talking about a very simple thing. The fact is that a large number of foreigners from Bangladesh

have migrated to India...*(Interruptions)* I want that the law enacted in this regard should be implemented.

15.06 hrs.

(Col. Rao Ram Singh in the Chair)

Foreigners from Bangladesh are migrating in a very large number. It is very necessary for our country to check their influx...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI RAJESH PILOT (Dausa) : Sir, please allow me to say a few words.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Do you want to speak on the same subject?

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : No. On the subject of ex-servicemen. The Deputy Speaker has already allowed me to speak. I am happy that an ex-servicemen like you is sitting on the Chairman's seat...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : I am sorry Shri Rajesh Pilot there is nothing here.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : Sir, the Deputy Speaker has already allowed me to speak.

MR. CHAIRMAN : How long are you going to speak?

*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : It is on ex-servicemen. So, as an ex-servicemen I cannot say no if you want to speak on this subject.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : Sir, in 1971 when we were attacked by Pakistan, a lot of our soldiers sacrificed their lives. Just a week back I was in one of the villages. I have really felt that people have forgotten what sacrifices they have done to save the territory and integrity of this country in 1971. The Leader of the House, Shri Ram Vilas Paswan, is present here. We faced the Pakistani aggression between 14th and 17th December of that year. For the remembrance of their sacrifice, we can do something like publishing of a postal stamp. We can also request the Chief Ministers to hold civic reception for those who really fought for the nation's sake in order to give them respect. It could be done by District Magistrates at district level and Chief Secretaries and Chief Ministers at the State level just to remember their sacrifice in a humble way. I think this could be taken up.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I think, the Government may like to consider the suggestion of Shri Pilot because whatever we have done for the welfare of the Ex-servicemen is not enough really.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : Yes, Sir.