

## LOK SABHA

*Thursday, June 10, 1971/  
Jyaistha 20, 1893 (Saka)*

—————  
*The Lok Sabha met at Eleven  
of the Clock.*

[ MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair* ]

### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

#### Influx of Refugees from East Bengal and their Rehabilitation

\*391. SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state :

(a) the latest arrival of war evacuees from East Bengal and per head expenditure for food and other items for these evacuees, separately ;

(b) whether the evacuees who took shelter in relatives' houses or private quarters have been denied relief facilities ;

(c) the sanitation, baby food and milk arrangements made so far for them ;

(d) the reasons for not introducing self-help arrangements by the evacuees themselves for managing and running evacuee centres ; and

(e) the reasons for shifting them 25 miles away from the border areas ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA) : (a) So far about 5 million evacuees have arrived from East Bengal. The per head expenditure for food is Re. 1/- per head per day in West Bengal and Rs. 1.10 paise per head per day in Assam,

Meghalaya and Tripura. It has not been possible to calculate separately the per capita expenditure on other items, e.g. improvised shelter, medical assistance etc.

(b) At present, no relief is provided to evacuees staying outside the camps. All relief facilities are available as soon as the evacuees register themselves and seek admission to the camps.

(c) Adequate sanitation arrangements are provided. As far as possible, arrangements for supply of baby food and milk are being made depending on their availability.

(d) The evacuees are already assisting the camp authorities in cooking food and their voluntary help is made use of in other spheres, wherever possible.

(e) Consequent on a large-scale influx, there has been heavy concentration of evacuees in camps situated on the border and these camps cannot contain any more persons. Steps are accordingly being taken to set up large-sized camps in the interior or in other States to which the evacuees will be dispersed from the border areas.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : The conditions in which the refugees are staying belie all human imagination. Is it a fact that day before yesterday, the Chief Minister of West Bengal, Shri Ajoy Mukherjee, said in a press statement that about 18—20 lakh refugees are living in the open or under the shade of trees and they have no facilities for getting shelter in any camps ? Is it also a fact that the number of cholera deaths mentioned in a statement made in this House was less than the number indicated in a statement issued by Shri Jalaluddin Ahmed, Health Minister of West Bengal, on the same day when he put the figure at a thousand more ? Is it a fact that as they are not able to provide shelter to all the refugees, many of them have to take shelter in the houses of their relatives or benevolent persons in the border areas ? Is it true that this number runs into several lakhs ? If so, why do government not provide facilities for

getting ration or other food through government sources? Also, is it a fact that 400 gms. of rice, four pieces of potatoes and four pieces of onions are all that are given to a refugee? Is it true that they are not provided fuel, shawl, cash dole etc.? If so how can they be expected to cook these things and eat them? How could they cook? I want to know from the Government.

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA :** I share the anxiety of the hon. Member. He has quoted the remarks of the Health Minister and the Chief Minister of West Bengal. It is true that we have not been able to provide shelter to all of them because the influx is so great. Every day more than a lakh of persons are crossing the border and coming to our side. Looking to the magnitude of the problem, we cannot think in terms of providing shelter to each and every one of them the moment he comes. Certainly we are making all possible efforts to get materials such as tarpaulins, tents etc. from wherever we can get them. Some refugees are staying with their relations ..... (Interruptions) They should get themselves registered and those who stay with their relations should also be given facilities, rations etc. So far as vegetables and other things are concerned, the volunteer agencies are managing the camps and they are providing them these things.

**SHRI SAMAR GUHA :** They are not providing—what they give is only 400 grammes of rice, four pieces of potatoes and four pieces of onions. How can they cook without oil or fuel?

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA :** We give all cash assistance to the Governments of West Bengal and the other Governments. It is up to the State Governments to give things to them according to the prescribed limits. Every refugee, we have prescribed, should be given 400 grammes of rice and 300 grammes of vegetable and 100 grammes of dal.

**SHRI SAMAR GUHA :** No vegetable is given; only 100 gms. of dal.....(Interruptions) He does not know; he has not visited the place.

**MR. SPEAKER :** It is a very serious question and by your aggressiveness you make it lose all its importance.

**SHRI SAMAR GUHA :** I seek your protection, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Minister speaks so ignorantly, without knowing the things that are happening there. If I point this out, am I aggressive?

**SHRI BAI GOVIND VERMA :** It was brought to my notice that we have written to the Governments concerned that they should adhere to the scale of rations prescribed, and the quantities issued should in no way be less.

**SHRI SAMAR GUHA :** The Government have announced it as their policy that they would take all precautions to see that the Bangla Desh refugees may go back to their homeland. In view of this policy statement made by the Government, may I know whether the Government are going to transfer the refugees from the border areas to the interior places or to the other States, and whether they have considered that by shifting the refugees to other States—it might take months,—it may deaden their Bangla Desh sentiment and Bangla Desh emotions, and in that eventuality, it may be difficult for the Government to send the refugees back to Bangla Desh? May I know, also whether in shifting the refugees from Bangla Desh to other parts of India, the Government will see that both the Hindu and Muslim refugees are also sent and that there will be no selective choice of any community of the refugees?

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA :** There is no shift in our policy. The policy remains the same. We are determined that these people will go back to their homeland, Bangla Desh, the moment the situation is eased there, and we are sure that the situation will be eased there. (Interruption)

**AN HON. MEMBER :** What a wishful thinking?

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA :** About the second part of his question, namely, the dispersal of the refugees, there are some States like West Bengal and Tripura where the pressure is very high. The work of the authorities there is being paralysed because

of the huge numbers. So, we think it proper to disperse some of the refugees to some other neighbouring States where they may be properly accommodated in big-size camps.

So far as the shifting of the refugees is concerned, we make no distinction whether one is a Muslim or a Hindu refugee. Both the communities, as they have come, are being shifted from that place without any discrimination.

**SHRI MOHAMMAD TAHIR :** May I know whether it is a fact that some of the refugees who have entered Bihar were staying with their relations, but the local police force them to go to the camps? Now, as we know, there are so many refugees who are putting up with their relatives. May I know whether the Government is prepared to allow those persons also to return back to live with their relations in case they do not claim relief of any kind?

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA :** The number of refugees who have entered Bihar is very negligible. It is 4,301. The Government of India have taken all these aspects into consideration. The policemen might have been going there. There is no intention to remove them from their relations. They would be allowed to stay there.

**श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेई :** अध्यक्ष जी, जो हमारे देश में शरण के लिए आये थे आज उन्हें मरण का सामना करना पड़ रहा है और जिसका कारण यह है कि सरकार ने पहले से अन्दाज़ नहीं लगाया कि कितने विस्थापितों को हमें अपने देश में रखना पड़ेगा, उनको बसाने का प्रबन्ध करना पड़ेगा। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि सरकार ने इस समय अन्दाज़ लगाया है कि भविष्य में और कितने विस्थापित आने वाले हैं? पहले कहा गया था उन्हें सीमा पर रखा जायेगा और अब सीमा से हटाया जा रहा है तो सरकार की इसके बारे में कोई नीति तय नहीं है। भविष्य में कितने शरणार्थी आने वाले हैं और उनके पुनर्वास की क्या व्यवस्था की जायेगी क्या इस दृष्टि से सरकार इस पर विचार कर

रही है? सरकार आये दिन अपनी नीतियां बदलती रहती है।

**श्री बालगोविंद वर्मा :** माननीय सदस्य ने यहां पर जो अपने विचार प्रकट किए हैं उसके सम्बन्ध में यही कह सकता हूँ कि यह दूसरे देश का मामला है, हमें उसके बारे में कोई पता नहीं है। हम सोच रहे थे कि मैक्सिमम 30 लाख तक रेपयूजीज इस देश में आयेंगे लेकिन हमारी वह आशा खत्म हो गई। अभी तक करीब 53 लाख विस्थापित आ चुके हैं और हर रोज करीब एक लाख और आ रहे हैं। ऐसी स्थिति में हम मदन को किस प्रकार आश्वासन दें कि कितने विस्थापित आयेंगे। अन्दाज़ा है कि 70-80 लाख तक हो सकते हैं लेकिन हम यहां पर कोई आश्वासन नहीं दे सकते क्योंकि कोई फीगर्म हमारे पास नहीं है, वे दूसरे देश से आ रहे हैं। उस देश की परिस्थितियों के बारे में भी हमें कोई विशेष जानकारी नहीं है। इसलिए यहां पर आपको यह बताना कि कितने विस्थापित आयेंगे बड़ा कठिन है।

जहां तक सरकार की नीति का सवाल है, हमारी नीति में कोई परिवर्तन नहीं हुआ है। जो विस्थापित आते हैं हम उनकी पूरी देखभाल करते हैं और अपने माधनों के अन्दर उनको हर तरह की सुविधा देने का प्रयत्न करते हैं।

**SHRI JAGANATH RAO :** In view of the fact that the influx of evacuees has exceeded 5 million and there is a likelihood of more coming in and in view of the various complaints received from time to time about the relief given to them, has Government considered the desirability of having a skeleton staff and a minister at Calcutta, as was done after partition, when the number of refugees was smaller?

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA :** In order to tackle this problem, we have established our branch secretariat there with one Additional Secretary in charge. Ministers also go there very often and we are in touch with it.

**SHRI BISWANARAYAN SHASTRI :** Some evacuees have entered into remote villages of Assam and Meghalaya and in some places they have been trying to occupy land forcibly, which is resented by the people. As a matter of fact, youths of Meghalaya observed hartal in Shillong against the influx of refugees into the villages. May I know whether Government will take strong measures to see that refugees are kept confined to the camps and they do not spread like epidemic into the villages ?

**SHRI SAMAR GUHA :** I protest against this very objectionable mark. It is due to the failure of the Government.

**SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU :** In fairness he should withdraw it. (*Interruptions*)

**SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE :** You should ask him to withdraw it.

**MR. SPEAKER :** Mr. Shastri, you are such a nice and perfect gentleman. This last word you said did not sound well. (*Interruptions*).

**SHRI BISHWANARAYAN SHASTRI :** He abused me ; therefore ; I was provoked.

**SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE :** This House has passed a resolution expressing solidarity with the people of Bangla Desh. When they come for shelter, they should not be described as an epidemic. I thought some members of the ruling party will also protest against it.

**MR. SPEAKER :** Will you please leave it to the hon. member to withdraw it ? (*Interruptions*).

**SHRI BISWANARAYAN SHASTRI.** I am not going to withdraw it.

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA** rose—

**SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE :** The minister does not come in the picture. You represent the House and you asked him to withdraw it.

**SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA :** He has not the slightest consideration even to your request.

**MR. SPEAKER :** If there were some unparliamentary words, I would have expunged them without perhaps his consent. But so far as the deletion of the word which is objected to is concerned, I leave it to the good sense of the hon. member. If your colleagues do not like it, if we have passed a resolution to this effect...

**SHRI BISWANARAYAN SHASTRI :** I have no intention to hurt the feeling of that section of the House, if they do not we like it. I withdraw it.

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA :** The hon. Member has made a suggestion and we will look into it.

**SHRI TRIDIB CHAUDHURI :** My question arises from the answer that the hon. Minister gave just now with regard to the organisational set up that the Ministry has made in Calcutta to tackle the situation. Already an hon. Member has pointed out that when the refugees first started coming in after 1947 or 1950, in West Bengal we had one entire Ministry devoted to the work of refugee reception and rehabilitation. Now this Ministry is only tackling the residuary work of rehabilitation more or less because the Government position was that the rehabilitation work has finished, only some residuary work remains and they are tackling that. Are the Government satisfied with the organisation that they have set up ? Are the arrangements that they have made adequate to tackle this vast and stupendous problem, the size of which in the Minister's own confession they have not yet been able to assess ? Could I ask him whether he will at least draw the attention of the Government to the urgency, stupendousness and gigantism of the whole task so that one independent organisation could be built up to look into the whole matter ? Whether it should be a separate Ministry or a department under the charge of a Deputy Minister is for the Prime Minister to decide. We want to register our emphatic protest that the Minister of Rehabilitation is away from our country. Without meaning any disrespect to my hon friend, the Deputy Minister, this is not the way in which this problem should be tackled. It is a national

crisis. Let the government be awake to the situation.

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA :** We are seized of the situation and we are satisfied with the arrangements which we have made there. We are reviewing the situation now and then and, if any need arises, we will do the needful.

**श्री बी पी. मोयं** माननीय मंत्री महोदय ने एक प्रश्न का उत्तर देते समय कहा था कि जहाँ तक व्यवस्था का प्रश्न है, यह उन्होंने प्रान्तीय सरकारों को सौंप दिया है और वह मारी देखभाल कर रही है। प्रान्तीय सरकारों की लिमिटेड शक्ति को देखते हुए क्या मंत्री महोदय इस बात का ध्यान रखेंगे कि यह एक विशेष समस्या है और इस पर केन्द्र का सीधा सीधा अंकुश रहे ? शरणार्थियों के बीच में भयानक किस्म का हैजा फैला हुआ है और सरकार की नीति यह रही है कि उनको अलग राज्यों में भेजा जाय। इस हैजे की समस्या को और राजनीतिक और सामाजिक समस्या को सामने रखते हुए क्या सरकार अपनी नीति को बदलेगी और जो शरणार्थी आये हुए हैं उन का बार्डर के आस पास ही रखेंगे ?

**श्री बालगोविंद वर्मा** जैसा अभी माननीय सदस्य ने कहा, यह जिम्मेदारी केन्द्र को लेनी चाहिए। केन्द्र की ओर से इस बात का ध्यान में रखा गया है और इसी लिए बड़े बड़े कैम्प बना कर वेस्ट बंगाल और दूसरे बार्डर के राज्यों से रिफ्यूजियों को हटाकर दूसरे राज्यों को ले जाना चाहती है ताकि बार्डर के राज्यों का बोझ कम हो जाय। जहाँ तक दूसरी जगहों पर उनको भेजने का प्रश्न है, हम इसको अच्छी तरह देख रहे हैं कि वहाँ कोई परेशानी न होने पाये, यानी अगर रिफ्यूजी वगैरह दूसरी जगह जायें तो हैजा वगैरह वहाँ न फैलने पाये। अगर हम उनको दूसरे दूर के राज्यों में ले जाते हैं तो यह हमारी पालिसी के खिलाफ है, लेकिन हमारी मजबूरी है क्योंकि जहाँ पर वह लोग आजकल हैं वहाँ जगह नहीं है।

**श्री राम सहाय पांडे :** आधे करोड़ से अधिक शरणार्थी हमारे देश में शरण लेने के लिए आये और हमने उनका स्वागत किया। उनके बसाने के प्रबन्ध में मंत्री महोदय ने कहा कि उनको सन्तोष है। उनको शासन की दृष्टि से सन्तोष हो सकता है, लेकिन जानना तो यह है कि शरणार्थियों को भी सन्तोष है या नहीं। आपने अनेक राज्यों को अप्रोच किया कि वह अपने यहाँ शरणार्थियों को बसायें। प्रश्न यह है कि किन किन राज्यों ने आप के सुझाव को माना और क्या प्रबन्ध किया। जिस तरह से मध्य प्रदेश ने माना, कैम्प में 50 हजार शरणार्थियों का स्वागत किया, उसी तरह यदि तमाम राज्य उत्साह के साथ उनका स्वागत नहीं करेंगे तो आपका काम कठिन हो जायेगा। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि किन किन राज्यों ने कितने कितने शरणार्थियों को अपने यहाँ बसाने का दायित्व लिया है ?

**श्री बालगोविंद वर्मा :** सभी राज्यों से बातचीत चल रही है। मध्य प्रदेश में करीब डेढ़ लाख रिफ्यूजी ले जाने का इरादा है। इसी प्रकार से उड़ीसा गवर्नमेंट ने भी उनको बेलकम किया है। वहाँ पर भी वह लोग जा रहे हैं। हम बिहार गवर्नमेंट से भी बात कर रहे हैं और यू. पी. गवर्नमेंट से भी कर रहे हैं। अभी सिर्फ पड़ोस के राज्यों से ही बात चल रही है क्योंकि हम यदि उनको ज्यादा दूर ले जायेंगे तो वापस करने में परेशानी होगी।

**SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE :** In view of the obvious fact that it is beyond our capacity to deal with this absolutely staggering problem, in spite of the complacent answer which the Minister gave to Shri Tridib Chaudhuri, may I know if Government's attention has been drawn to the discussion in the House of Commons yesterday in which Sir Alec Douglas Home referred to the demand made in the House of Commons in Britain about this matter being raised at the Security Council, because it was no longer an internal matter for Pakistan or for India, and Sir Alec Douglas Home answered that this was an issue for Pakistan or for

India and that neither upto now proposed taking such action at present? May I know, how is it that, in spite of the problem assuming tremendous and absolutely impossible proportions, we are not utilising forums which are open to us while the House of Commons discusses possibilities which we have not tried to explore? May I know what Government is trying to do in this direction?

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA :** We have seen this report in the newspapers.

**SHRI S. M. BANERJEE :** This is in this statement which has been circulated to all Members. The Prime Minister should have been there. She was expecting this question to come up. The Prime Minister is not abroad.

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA :** This question does not relate to me but to some other Ministry. But because it is put to me, I am answering it. Therefore, he should not feel agitated. If he requires some more information, he should give notice of another question and he can get the proper information.

**SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE :** It is a matter affecting the country in an emergency fashion. I do not know if he cannot tell us what Government has in mind, whether Government has a unitary policy or not.

**MR. SPEAKER :** Perhaps he may not be in a position to answer. He can direct this question to the Ministry of External Affairs to be answered in this House later on.

**SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU :** In reply to sub-question (e), the Minister has said that refugees are being taken to places which are about 25 miles away from the border. In that connection may I ask --and he will be good enough to give us a correct answer-- if in Meghalaya at Baghmara evacuees coming from Bangla Desh are not being allowed to enter India at all; if so, what is the reason; if not, what is the actual position?

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA :** This thing has not come to my notice. The hon.

Member has brought it to my notice. I will certainly look into and pass on the information to him.

**SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU :** This matter was raised on the floor of the House with your permission, Sir. If the hon. Minister pleads ignorance, that is a very poor state of affairs. Let this go on record. The Government itself is not keen to help.

**MR. SPEAKER :** He has taken note of it. (*Interruptions*)

**SHRI SAMAR GUHA :** You should direct Mr. Khadikar not to go abroad.

श्री रामचन्द्र विकल . एक प्रश्न पर ही आध घंटा हो गया है ।

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : बहुत महत्वपूर्ण प्रश्न है ।

श्री प्रबोध चन्द्र : क्या मंत्री महोदय के इल्म में यह बात आई है कि कई प्रान्तों में रिफ्यूजी के आने में लोकल पापुलेशन और इनमें कई हद तक तनाव पैदा हो गया है और इस कारण से वहां स्टेट के सामने ला एण्ड आर्डर की मिचु-एणन पैदा हो गई है? यदि हाँ, तो क्या सरकार इन ओर तवज्जह दे रही है?

श्री बालगोविंद वर्मा : इग सम्बन्ध में मुझे केवल यह कहना है कि हमें इस तरह की खबरें मिली हैं जैसे वेस्ट बंगाल में कि वहां पर थोड़ी सी तनातनी लोकल पापुलेशन में हुई है और वह इस कारण से कि वहां ये लोग जो आये हैं ये मस्ती लेबर देने के लिए तैयार हो जाते हैं जैसे रिक्सा चलाने के मामले में या और कामों में । वहां की जो लोकल लेबर है वह इसको पसन्द नहीं करती है कि ये लोग वहां पर मस्ती काम करें । इस वास्ते वहां पर यह जो प्राब्लेम है, इसको हमारे नोटिस में लाया गया है । उसी हिमाब से हम रिफ्यूजी को वहां से हटा रहे हैं ।

**MR. SPEAKER :** This Question has taken more than half an hour. This is

something exceptional. I know there are a number of Members who are still keen to put questions. If they give a notice for half-an-hour discussion, I will agree to it.

**DR. RANEN SEN :** There should be a proper discussion on the evacuees from Bangla Desh.

**SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE :** We have already given notice under Rule 193 for a short duration discussion.

**SHRI PILOO MODY :** The least we can do for the refugees is to sit on a Saturday, if necessary.

**MR. SPEAKER :** Next Question.

**Help from International Agencies Like Red Cross for Bangla Desh Refugees**

\*393. **SHRI S. M. BANERJEE :** Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether International agencies like Red Cross have been contacted to help rehabilitate the evacuees from Bangla Desh ; and

(b) if so, what concrete assurances have been given by those agencies ?

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA) :** (a) and (b). Government has not approached any International agency for help in the matter of rehabilitation of evacuees from Bangla Desh. However, an appeal has been made to UN Secretary General and also a number of International voluntary agencies have been approached for assistance to provide relief in the form of food, shelter, medical supplies etc to the evacuees.

A statement showing the assistance received from or promised by various International agencies is laid on the Table of the Sabha. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-368/71]

**SHRI S.M. BANERJEE :** It appears from the statement that some of the countries and voluntary organisations have donated

either cash amount or given some relief in the form of milk powder, medicines, clothings, etc. But this appears to be not enough. I should like to know from the hon. Minister whether it is true that no request has been made by the Government of India. I would like to quote the statement made by Sir Alec Douglas-Home in the House of Commons. When he was asked by some of the Members in the House of Commons as to whether any request was made to the Government by the Government of India, he said :

“The answer to the question about more money being made available now, he said, was “that we will certainly consider whether that should be done. We have had no direct request from the Indian Government though there will be a meeting of the India Consortium on June 17. I would rather wait to see if there is an Indian request, as we anticipate at that time.”

So, I would like to know whether the Government of India have made a request to the Government apart from making a request to the United Nations which has become a mere spectator of the sorrow and shame on our own brothers in Bangla Desh.

So, I would like to know whether any request has been made to other countries and if so what is that request.

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA :** As far as I know, Prime Minister has personally addressed letter to foreign Governments. Replies have also been received. I do not know how this particular time appeared in the Press. Otherwise, so far as I know, the Prime Minister addressed letters personally to the various foreign Governments.

**SHRI S.M. BANERJEE :** We are happy to know that the Prime Minister of USSR Mr. Kosygin has given a call for immediate steps and he has asked Pakistan to ensure safety in East Bengal. The Soviet Prime Minister has said that Pakistan must create conditions for peace and safety in East Bengal so that the refugees in India could safely return. My question is addressed to the Prime Minister. I am really sorry she is not present.