

SHRI R.L. BHATIA: As I said, this was an Expert Group...

MR. SPEAKER: This has not come in the discussion. That is the answer.

SHRI R.L. BHATIA: It has no mandate. It has a limited task.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Sir, one of the areas which the representatives from both China and India were discussing, is border trade relations. May I know from the Minister whether the areas have been identified where the trade relationship can be developed?

SHRI R.L. BHATIA: Sir, we have had discussions with them with regard to opening more areas for border trade. At present trade is going on at Lepichek and now we have also asked for the Shipkai area in Himachal Pradesh to be opened for border trade. This is under consideration.

MR. SPEAKER: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[Translation]

Interview by Indonesian Minister on Farakka Issue

*65. MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) BHUWAN CHANDRA KHANDURI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item appearing in the Bangladesh

newspaper "New Nation" dated November 5, 1993 regarding an interview given by the Health Minister of Indonesia on Farakka issue;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have taken up this matter with Indonesia;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DINESH SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) According to the newspaper report, the Health Minister of Indonesia stated that India had no right to unilaterally withdraw the waters of the Ganges and that the UN should take care of the Farakka issue immediately.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs conveyed to our Embassy in Jakarta that their Health Minister was misreported by the said newspaper and that the observations attributed to him on the Farakka issue were without any basis.

(e) Does not arise.

[English]

Doordarshan Programmes

*66. SHRI SOBHANADREES WARAO VADDE:

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether in comparison to Doordarshan programmes, the programmes of foreign T.V. networks have become popular in the country;

(b) if so, whether the quality of Doordarshan programmes has been declining;

(c) whether the Government have conducted any survey in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the steps being taken to improve the quality of Doordarshan Programmes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Yes, Sir. Such surveys are regularly done by Doordarshan.

(d) The surveys have revealed that the programmes of Doordarshan continue to enjoy high viewership. On its part Doordarshan constantly strives to bring about a qualitative improvement in its programmes in order to sustain the interest of its viewers.

Indo-UAE Joint Commission

*67. DR. K.D. JESWANI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the meeting of Indo-UAE Joint Commission was held recently; and

(b) if so, the subjects that figured in the meeting and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DINESH SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. The Seventh Session of the Indo-UAE Joint Commission was held in New Delhi from January 4-6, 1994.

(b) The Joint Commission discussed in detail a wide range of issues relating to investment, trade, economic and manpower matters and interaction in the areas of water & telecommunications, banking, education & information and media exchanges.

Agreements on counter trafficking in Narcotic drugs and the Cultural Exchange Programme for 1994-96 were signed by the two sides. The Narcotic Agreement which provides for exchange of information and other cooperation between the designated agencies of the two sides, is the first which India has signed with any Arab country. The Cultural Exchange Programme comprises a specific annual action plan for cooperation in the fields of education, including higher education, art, culture, tourism, information, mass media and sports.

Technical discussions were held and considerable headway was made on a bilateral treaty dealing with extradition. Follow-up action on areas of cooperation agreed to is continuing.

Talks with Pakistan

*68. SHRI RAM PRASAD SINGH:

SHRI RAJESH KUMAR:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Foreign Secretary level