

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Wednesday, May 7, 1997/Vaisakha 17, 1919 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[SHRI P.M. SAYEED in the Chair]

INTRODUCTION OF MINISTER

[English]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : Sir, with your permission, may I introduce to you and through you to the august House, my colleague Shri R. Dhanushkodi Athithan, Minister of State in the Department of Youth Affairs and Sports in the Ministry of Human Resource Development?

11.01 hrs

[Translation]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Secretary-Level talk between India and Pakistan

441 KUMARI UMA BHARATI :
KUNWAR SARVARAJ SINGH :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Secretary level talk has been resumed between India and Pakistan recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the issues discussed therein;

(c) whether the issue of instigating terrorism by Pakistan's intelligence agency ISI was also discussed during the aforesaid talk; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) and (b) India-Pakistan Foreign Secretary talks were held in New Delhi from 28-31 March, 1997. During the talks, India conveyed its readiness to discuss all outstanding issues between the two countries and its desire to develop cooperation on a broad range of economic, commercial and cultural areas as well as encourage people-to-people contacts and consider specific confidence building measures.

(c) and (d) During the discussions we expressed our strong concern about Pakistan's support for terrorism in Jammu & Kashmir and the proxy war it has instigated.

[Translation]

KUMARI UMA BHARATI : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the people of India and Pakistan want to have very cordial relationships with each other. But to have a cordial relations, we

have to improve our relations on economic, commercial, political and cultural front. When we were having secretary level talks between the two countries during the tenure of Shir Deve Gowda ji, we were also witnessing several blasts. On the one hand they were holding dialogue with us but on the other, they were causing bomb blasts in Jammu i.e. they were taking us into their arms but at the same time stabbing us into our back. It is very good sign that we have started holding talks with Pakistan. I am very happy over this development and I want to quote a couplet in this regard.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Do not say a couplet, please ask the question.

KUMARI UMA BHARATI : Mr. Chairman, Sir, my question lies in the couplet itself which is:

Idhar Chilman se Ham Jhanke
Udhar Chilman se Tum Jhanko
Aao Laga do Aag Chilman ko
Na Ham Jhanke Na Tum Jhanko.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I, through you, want to ask the Prime Minister as to whether issues pertaining to the Line of Actual Control, Jammu-Kashmir and Siachin were discussed during the talks or not?

My second question is as to what is the position of the Government in respect of the statement made by Sh. Farooq Abdullah in which he has said that POK land should be given to Pakistan?

[English]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : Sir, I will reply to the second question first. So far as any statement made by anybody about the position of Kashmir which is different than the official position of India, it is not acceptable to us. This is one point which is very clear. The State of Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India. Therefore, any statement made by anybody is not our position.

So far as the discussions are concerned, as my colleague has said, the two Foreign Secretaries did have initial discussions on various situations. As the talks progress, we will see how the situations develops. As you know, next week I am meeting the Prime Minister of Pakistan in Male. So, I would suggest, Sir, if you kindly permit me and if my hon'ble friends agree, we do not go further into this at this stage.

[Translation]

KUMARI UMA BHARATI : The Prime Minister is a very sensitive man. Very often it is reported in the news papers that still there are many Indian Army officers (POWs) languishing in Pakistani jails. The Prime Minister must be feeling their pain and anguish. I want to know from him or to whether he would take-up this matter while holding future rounds of talks with Pakistan as he has discussed the issue of fishermen during his previous talks?

My second question is that whether like India, Pakistan is also offering the Visa facilities to the Indian citizens visiting Nankana Sahib, Katasaraj and Prahladpuri etc.?

[English]

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL : So far as the first question about prisoners in Pakistani jails is concerned, when I met, as Foreign Minister, my counterpart, this issue was discussed and the reply given to me was that they were satisfied that there is nobody in their jails. But all the same, my counterpart, that is the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, had asked me to send him the list, and he was also willing, at the same time, to further examine it. He said they are not interested in keeping anybody in that category in jails. About the fisherman, a statement has already been made. We, both have agreed. (Interruptions)

KUMARI UMA BHARATI : What about the pilgrims who go to Kathasraj, Nankana Sahib and Prahladpuri?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let him answer. Do not disturb him.

KUMARI UMA BHARATI : Regarding Visa for the pilgrims what did the Pakistani side offer? It is because that still there are some difficulties for the pilgrims going to Kathasraj and Prahladpuri from India. (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL : I was not speaking on that point, I was speaking about the prisoners in Pakistani jails

MR. CHAIRMAN : That is why I asked you to listen him fully only then ask your question.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL : Your second question relates to Indian pilgrims some of whom go to Panja Sahib and some to other pilgrimages. Facilities provided are not adequate enough and we have discussed it many a times. We will discuss to improve it in future also. On their part, they are saying that they have been extending facilities.

[English]

SHRI RAGUNANDAN LAL BHATIA : Sir, there is a great change in Pakistan since Mr. Nawaz Sharif came to power. He has been able to deal with the fundamental forces very nicely. He has been able to curb the powers of the President also. So, in this situation, the efforts made by our Government to improve relations with Pakistan are commendable. Secretary-level talks were held. In a statement, he has mentioned that there would be certain specific confidence-building measures also. Could he please let us know what were those specific confidence-building measures which he has offered to Pakistan?

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL : Sir, I do not think we have reached that stage where we should offer measures. We have discussed the generalities. We have to think and identify such mutual steps which would enhance the prospects of confidence-building measures. I hope when the Foreign Secretaries meet, such measures will come.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL : Sir, there have been occasions in the recent past that in the old forum like WTO, India and Pakistan had to fight together because of certain mutuality of interest. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether any endeavour has so far been made during the current dialogue or in the recent past to work out areas of

common concern and mutuality of interest so that a common stand as far as possible can be taken in such international fora?

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL : Of course, what my hon. friend has said, I confirm that we have a common stand on WTO, But I think we should hasten slowly because we are, now, in the process of initiating a dialogue. One round has taken place at the Foreign Secretary-level. As a Foreign Minister, I had met Mr. Gohar Ayub. I will, now, be meeting the Prime Minister. The situation between our two countries is such that as I said, we have to hasten slowly.

[Translation]

SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am happy that the Prime Minister has said that Kashmir is an integral part of India but he has also said

[English]

"anybody is statement" Dr. Farooq Abdullah is not anybody. He is the Chief Minister of a State

[Translation]

He is repeating again and again that Line of Actual Control should be made the issue (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : He has already replied.

[Translation]

SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA : It has not been replied at all. We want to know as to whether America is fishing in the water..... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Why do not you ask your own question?

SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA : We know that Kashmir is an integral part of India but I think that whole of Kashmir is ours and we have passed a resolution in Parliament in this regard. We must take it into account..... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : He has already replied to this question.

[Translation]

SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA : If a Chief Minister of any state speaks like this, why should not he be asked to clarify his position?

[English]

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL : Sir, I think, I made my statement very categorically. And whatever Resolution has been made by Parliament, we honour that Resolution.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Sir, people to people relationship between India and Pakistan is gaining a very positive momentum for the last few years. It has been evidenced on many occasions such as when cultural delegations led by individuals like Shri Dilip Kumar, musicians visited Paki-

stan. I can give you the example, Mr. Prime Minister—there was fear in our mind whether Pakistan would like us or not—that when the Indian football team has been to Peshawar, it was the Pakistan political leaders in the Government who came in the street, embraced our players for scoring the goals and expressed their goodwill. So, on every part, it was found that the goodwill was still there. But unfortunately whenever an initiative is taken by the Government, some international forces, by their own design, try to see that Indo-Pakistan relationship is not further gaining momentum. The contribution made by the late Lal Bahadur Shastri, who laid his life in Tashkent, was for a fast durable peace in Pakistan and India; followed by Shrimati Indira Gandhi's initiative in the Shimla Agreement; Shri Vajpayee, when he was the Foreign Minister, did a tremendous job to improve the relationship between India and Pakistan; and finally, in the SAARC Summit led by Shri Rajiv Gandhi, Mrs. Bhutto had to say that India's intention was the best one so far as Pakistan was concerned.

May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether in his next process which he is likely to do with the Prime Minister of Pakistan in Male, he is convinced or hopeful that it will be within the ambit of the Shimla Agreement?

Secondly, in view of the growing democratic development in Pakistan by taking away the powers of the President and all these things, is the Prime Minister fully convinced that the time has come that the international pressure, which has come from time to time to frustrate the relations between India and Pakistan will be totally stopped this time and will the Government of India, under no circumstances, submit to any kind of manipulations, machinations and power games in the sub-continent while deciding the relation between India and Pakistan straightaway?

We have full confidence in the Prime Minister, Shri I.K. Gujral, who is having personal, political and diplomatic experience. He is going to make a breakthrough and the nation should not question anything at this moment and should not embarrass him.

I would like to know whether the Shimla Agreement would cover the ambit of his discussion while he meets the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL : Sir, while I think my young friend for complimenting me, on one point, I would not like to comment. That is, whatever is happening internally in Pakistan, whether the Constitution is amended or not amended, I am not going to comment on that. That is their business.

So far as the bilateral talks are concerned, the Shimla Agreement emphasises the bilateral talks. And, I think, the two rounds that have taken place at the Foreign Secretary level, at my level as the Foreign Minister and third that might take place in Male is within that ambit.

Retirement Age

*442. SHRI P. KODANDA RAMAIAH : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Fifth Pay Commission has recommended for raising retirement age of Government employees from 58 to 60 years;

(b) if so, whether implementation of this particular recommendation is likely to increase the number of educated unemployed; and

(c) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI. S.R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN) : (a) Yes Sir. The Fifth Central Pay Commission has recommended that the age of retirement of Central Government employees (except those in the Armed Forces, Central Police Organisations or on extension) be raised to 60 years with effect from a prospective date to be notified by the Government. The Commission has also recommended that since the present age of superannuation of Central Government employees has acted a bench mark for determining the ages of superannuation of other categories of employees, judicial officers, constitutional authorities etc. the Commission expects that its recommendation would lead to a suitable re-adjustment in order to maintain the present relativities.

(b) and (c) The recommendations of the Pay Commission are under the consideration of the Government.

Pay Commission

*451.+ DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI :
DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for the inordinate delay in adoption of the recommendations of Fifth Pay Commission;

(b) whether the Government have received threats from the Central Government employees to go on strike at any time on this issue;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;

(d) the expected date of adoption and implementation of the report; and

(e) the financial implications on account of implementation of the recommendations of the above commission?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) There has been no delay in the consideration of the Report of the Pay Commission. In accordance with the established procedure, the recommendations are required to be scrutinised by an Empowered Committee, which has already met thrice. The views of the Staff Side are also required to be ascertained. A meeting has been held with them. The report is being processed further.

(b) and (c) The Government has not received any notice/threat from the Government employees to go on strike on this issue.