

The Foreign Secretary Level meetings have provided the opportunity for friendly and frank discussions. Both sides have felt that such meetings have been useful and productive and enabled a valuable exchange of views.

#### **Bhutan**

Foreign Secretary Level meetings were held at Thimpu on October 28-29, 1995, May 2-8, 1996 November 24-25, 1996 March 2-3, 1991, April 25-27, 1997 and July 21-24, 1997.

Relations between India and Bhutan have been close and cordial and relatively trouble-free. An important factor in nurturing and sustaining this relationship is the well established tradition of frequent and extensive exchange of views between leaders/officials of the two countries. Foreign Secretary level talks is a part of this regular exercise which enabled a comprehensive review of the entire gamut of Indo-Bhutan relations as well as exchange of views on regional and international issues of mutual interest.

#### **Bangladesh**

Foreign Secretary Level talks were held at Dhaka on June 23-25, 1995, on July 5-7, 1996, and at New Delhi on August 6-9, 1996.

During Foreign Secretary's visit to Bangladesh on June 23-25, 1995, bilateral issues of mutual concern were discussed. When Foreign Secretary visited Bangladesh as Special Envoy of the Prime Minister on July 5-7, 1996, besides delivering a letter from our Prime Minister to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, during his meeting with the Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh he conveyed the goodwill and desire of the Government of India for cooperative relations in all fields of mutual interest. These sentiments were reciprocated by the Bangladesh side. When the Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh visited India as a Special Envoy of Prime Minister of Bangladesh on August 6-9, 1996, during Foreign Secretary level talks matters relating to bilateral trade, water resources, transportation, telecommunication, etc. as well as SAARC related matters were discussed. Both sides also felt the need to encourage direct contacts between the private sectors of the two countries.

#### **Maldives**

Foreign Secretary level talks were held at Male on November 26, 1997 during which matters relating to convening of the 4th Session of Indo-Maldives Joint Commission, visit of the President of Maldives to India, bilateral cooperation in a variety of fields, including health and education were discussed. Foreign Secretary had visited Male to attend the meeting of the Standing Committee of SAARC Foreign Secretaries and the 19th Session of the SAARC Council of Ministers.

[Translation]

#### **Monitoring of reservation**

1250. SHRI JAGDAMBI PRASAD YADAV : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government has set up any panel for monitoring implementation of 27% reservation for other backward classes and 22.5 % reservation of Scheduled Castes and Schedule Tribes in Government Services;

(b) if so, the composition of the panel and the details of its terms of reference and *modus operandi* ; and

(c) the details of the present position regarding filling up of due quota of OBC in Government services and whether any time bound scheme has been chalked out for the purpose ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M. R. JANARTHANAN) : (a) No Sir.

(b) Does not arise, in view of (a) above.

(c) Every endeavour is made by the administrative ministries/departments to fill up the due quota of OBCs subject to observances of 50% ceiling on reservation for SCs/STs & OBCs taken together. Therefore, a time bound scheme to fill up all the posts of OBCs at one go is not feasible.

[English]

#### **Russian Missiles To Pakistan**

1251. SHRI NARESH PUGLIA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Russian Missiles may find their way to Pak from China" appearing in the *Hindustan Times* dated April 4, 1998;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government on such deal;

(c) whether the Government propose to raise such issues in the international forum to diffuse tension; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE) : (a) Yes, Sir. However, this news item appeared in the *Hindustan Times* issue of 28th April, 1998.

(b) to (d) Government are aware of the ongoing military cooperation between Russia and China including the sale of some ships which have the capacity to carry supersonic anti-ship missiles SSN-22.

Government are also aware of the transfer of missiles and missile technology from China to Pakistan. Our concerns about such transfer are well known and have been conveyed in our bilateral discussions with various countries.

[Translation]

### Haj Pilgrimages

1252. SHRI AJIT JOGI : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) the number of pilgrims who visited Saudi Arabia during the last three years;

(b) whether all the Haj Pilgrims travel by air or some still travel by ships;

(c) the state-wise number of the Hajis propose the visit to Saudi Arabia during next year; and

(d) the details of the average expenditure on air and sea voyage, separately ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS ( SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE ) :  
(a) to (d) The number of Indian pilgrims who went to Saudi Arabia for Haj in the last three years, is as follows :

(i) 1996	75,000 (approximately)
(ii) 1997	87,516
(iii) 1998	95,119

2. Since Haj 1995, all Indian Haj Pilgrims travel only by air.

3. For 1999, Government have not yet fixed the quota of Indian pilgrims performing Haj through the Haj Committee. This is expected to be done in the next one month after which State-wise quota will be determined by the Haj Committee.

4. The air fare paid by pilgrims who go for Haj through the Haj Committee is Rs. 12,000.

[English]

### Production of Butter and Ghee

1253. SHRI RAJVEER SINGH : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) the demand and the production of butter and ghee in the country during the last two years till date:

(b) whether the country has become self sufficient in this regard; and

(c) if not, the steps taken by the Government to meet the requirement of butter and ghee in the country ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) The demand of butter and ghee varies according to the price, consumer preference, purchasing power, availability of substitutes in the market. The production is dependent on demand and hence it also varies. A major portion of butter and ghee is produced in the unorganised sector for which no estimates are available. The butter and ghee produced in metric tonnes during the last two years in the co-operative sector is as follows:

Period	Table Butter	Ghee
1996-97	33180	47264
1997-98*	30477	51650

\*Provisional.

(b) The import/export of milk fats are only marginal and hence by and large India is self sufficient in butter and ghee production.

(c) In view of (b) question does not arise.

### Cotton Varieties

1254. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state

(a) whether the Indian Textile Industry has requested for immediate withdrawal of a few varieties of cotton grown in the country;

(b) if so, whether any final decision has been taken in this regard ; and

(c) if so, the total varieties of cotton likely to be grown in the country ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) to (c) No. Sir No proposal has been recieved by the Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture & Cooperation) for withdrawal of some varieties of cotton grown in the country. However, the East India Cotton Association, Mumbai has requested the Indian Council of Agricultural Research ( ICAR) for elimination of obsolete varieties of cotton. If any proposal is recieved for de-notifying any variety under section 5 of the Seeds Act, the matter will be considered at the appropriate time. However, even if a variety is de-notified, there is no bar under the Seeds Act on farmers growing the de-notified cotton varieties.