

(a) whether the Bidi Workers of Godha and Gohalpur (Jabalpur M.P.) had launched an agitation in protest against Government's decision regarding fixing of wages and provision of other amenities;

(b) if so, the details of their demands; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to meet their requirements?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) No such report has come to the notice of the Government.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

[English]

Prithvi Missile

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

(a) whether Pakistan has decided to beef up its military arsenal and launch a diplomatic offensive as a part of three-pronged strategy to India's Prithvi missile;

(b) if so, whether this decision of Pakistan violate the agreement reached between the two countries at the Secretary-level talks held in Islamabad;

(c) if so, whether Pakistan has again initiated propaganda against India; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Indian Government thereto?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) and (d) Government are aware that Pakistan maintains a military arsenal far in excess of its legitimate defence requirements. Government are also aware of its persistent propaganda regarding the Prithvi missiles. Such propaganda is inconsistent with the firm intention of both countries to eschew hostile propaganda and provocative actions. This intention is contained in the Joint Statement issued at the conclusion of the Foreign Secretary-level talks held in Islamabad in June 1997. Government is carefully and continuously assessing the implications of Pakistan's military build-up and is taking all necessary steps to safeguard the national security.

Indo-US Relation

76. SHRI NAMDEO DIWATHE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether fresh initiatives have been taken to strengthen Indo-US cooperation in the era of liberalisation;

(b) whether the President of USA has accepted the invitation to visit India during the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of India's Independence; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI): (a) Government of India and the Government of the United States have recently had useful discussions during the June, 1997 visit to the US by Minister of State for External Affairs. Issues of mutual interest in the bilateral and international context were discussed during this visit in keeping with the desire of both countries to have a broad-based dialogue and relationship.

(b) and (c) Government have been informed that the US President is considering a visit to India during the 50th Anniversary celebrations of India's independence

[Translation]

IAS Officers

77. SHRI PUNNU LAL MOHLE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) sanctioned strength of IAS officers in the country, State-wise, as on date;

(b) actual strength of IAS officers in the country, State-wise, as on date;

(c) whether orders regarding reservation for SC/ST/OBC are implemented in appointments of IAS officers;

(d) if so, the number of SC/ST/OBC/IAS officers at present in each State;

(e) the number of vacant posts of IAS reserved for SC/ST/OBC, State-wise; and

(f) the time by which these vacant posts are likely to be filled up?

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) and (b) The sanctioned strength of IAS cadres, state wise, as on 17th July, 1997 and actual strength of IAS officers as on 17th July, 1997, is given in the attached statement-I.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The number of SC/ST/OBC IAS officers State-wise, as on 17th July, 1997, is given in the attached statement-II.

(e) Reservation in the IAS for SC/ST/OBC is vacancy based and not post based. All vacancies in the IAS are filled up in accordance with the reservation policy of the Government.

(f) In view of the answer at (e) above, the question does not arise.