

Racial Relations in U.K.

*161. DR. BALDEV PRAKASH:
SHRI MOHINDER SINGH
SAYIAN WALA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the question of racial relations and attacks on Indian nationals was taken up with the Prime Minister of U.K. on his recent visit to India; and

(b) whether any concrete steps were considered to safeguard the lives and properties of Indians in U.K.?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The British Prime Minister maintained that there was adequate legislation in the U.K. to deal with racial discrimination against Asian communities and that his Government would not accept any such discrimination. When any cases of failure to safeguard the lives and property of Indian nationals in the U.K. are reported, the Government of India takes them up with the British Government.

Asian Common Market

*162 SHRI VIJAY KUMAR
MALHOTRA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased so state:

(a) what are Government's detailed views on the idea of an enlarged Asian Common Market advocated by him in his speech at Hyderabad on January 28, 1978 (*Indian Express* January 29, 1978);

(b) whether the idea has been discussed with or proposed to the Governments of Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh; and

(c) on what grounds has the Government of Pakistan rejected this proposal as reported in *Times of India* on 3rd February, 1978?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE): (a) Sir, I did not advocate the idea of an enlarged Asian Common Market at Hyderabad. However, in my speech at Hyderabad on January 28, 1978 on "Changing International Order And India's Role In It", I made some general observations and projections into the future on the enlarged concept of mutual interdependence extending from Iran to Indo-China peninsula. I visualised a community of equal and Sovereign nations enriching each other with their national assets, economic, scientific and technological achievements as well as their culture and heritage. As is known, the Janata Government has given top priority to strengthening friendly ties with our immediate neighbours. The concept of regional cooperation is an enlargement of Government's desire to forge closer ties of friendship and mutually advantageous cooperation with neighbouring countries. It will be a long time before these ideas can take concrete shape. However, efforts will have to be made on a bilateral level with a view to laying the foundations of regional cooperation. It can only be done with the willing consent of all the countries concerned.

(b) During the visit of the Shahanshah of Iran, the need for greater economic cooperation between the countries of the region was discussed. It was felt that such cooperation could, in the initial stages, include cooperation in the fields of cultural exchanges, trade policy, industrial and technological collaboration and mutual assistance in agriculture, transport, tourism and communication. The two sides decided to hold further consultations with each other to work out the ways in which these ideas could be given concrete shape.