

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE) : (a) to (d) At India's initiative, the bilateral dialogue with Pakistan at the level of Foreign Secretaries was resumed in 1997. Three rounds of Foreign Secretary talks have been held. The first round of the talks was held in New Delhi from 28-31 March, 1997, and the second round was held in Islamabad from 19-23 June, 1997. A Joint Statement was issued at the conclusion of this round of discussions. The statement identified the following subjects to be discussed.

(a) Peace and security, including CBMs; (b) Jammu and Kashmir; (c) Siachen, (d) Tubul Navigation Project; (e) Sir Creek; (f) Terrorism and drug trafficking; (g) Economic and Commercial Cooperation; and (h) Promotion of friendly exchanges in various fields.

The two sides also agreed to set up a mechanism to address all these issues. The third round of the talks was held in New Delhi from 15-18 September, 1997. The two sides continued their exchange of views on the mechanism envisaged in the Joint Statement. It was felt that the issues required further consideration. The two sides, therefore, decided to adjourn and reconvene at mutually convenient dates.

The then Prime Minister met the Prime Minister of Pakistan in Dhaka in January 1998. On this occasion, Foreign Secretary handed over to his Pakistani counterpart a set of proposals regarding the modalities for discussions. It is now for Pakistan to respond to our proposals and a decision regarding the reconvening of the adjourned round is possible only thereafter.

#### **Demands by Fishermen and Trade Unions to Ban Fishing**

166. SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the demands raised by the fishermen and their trade unions to ban fishing in the oceans during the monsoon period using motorised boats and trawlers;

(b) whether Government had conducted any expert study about the reasons raised by fishermen to ban during the monsoon period; and

(c) if so, the findings thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) With a view to conserve fishery resources and prevent killing of juvenile fishes, some coastal States have been imposing ban on fishing during monsoon period. Central Government had received requests from the State Governments for imposing similar ban in the EEZ for the same period. However, no demand has been received from the fishermen and trade Unions for this purpose.

(b) and (c) The question does not arise.

#### **Firing in Tripoli**

167. SHRI S.S. OWAISI : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "3 Indians killed 80 hurt in Tripoli firing" appearing in the 'Indian Express' dated November 12, 1997;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government of India has taken up the matter with the Government of that country; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government to ensure such incidents do not take place in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) An Indian company, M/s Strength & Support Builders Pvt. Ltd. (SSB) is working as a sub-contractor to the Libyan Company, M/s Arab Union Contracting Co. The Indian workers employed by M/s SSB went on strike following an accident on 25 October 1997, in which one worker fell from the 8th floor of a building under construction, resulting in bone and ankle fractures. Indian workers, immediately thereafter held demonstrations and struck work. On 28 October 1997, the workers manhandled some Libyan officials working with the Libyan company who were trying to persuade them to accept the Indian Embassy's request for talks. The police was called in by the Libyan company to round-up workers who were inciting their colleagues to continue the strike. The workers retaliated by assaulting the police, throwing stones and damaging police vehicles and cars. In self-defence, the police opened fire. According to a report received from the Indian Embassy, 2 workers were killed in the firing and a number of them were injured. The workers thereafter continued to remain on strike despite pleas to the contrary by the Embassy of India, especially as strikes are illegal in Libya. Ultimately the matter could be resolved with the intervention of the Indian Mission and the workers resumed duties on 26 January 1998.

(d) To avoid recurrence of such incidents, all companies employing Indian workers have been asked to keep in touch with the Indian Embassy, to address expeditiously the genuine grievances of the workers and to ensure that the living conditions at the camps of the worker are satisfactory. Our Mission has also been asked to regularly visit the camps to ensure that the living conditions are adequate and to acquaint themselves with any problems our workers may be facing. The Libyan authorities have been advised to exercise restraint and patience in dealing with disputes involving Indian labour.