

The print media is reporting this corruption daily. We expect from you that you will fix responsibility in the coal scam. In the Umred mine in Ramtek, coal mines are on fire above ground. But mining has not started. Last time, the Umred mine at Ramtek had earned a profit of Rs. 84 crore. Mining work has come to a standstill in two-three mines there. Are you going to begin mining operation at the earliest or not? This year, the mines are going to earn a profit of Rs. 151 crore. I myself had gone there. I told the officials that they were not giving employment to the local people. Corruption is rampant there. Regarding these two or three things, you talk to the officials.

MR SPEAKER: You ask your question?

SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Mr Speaker, Sir, these recommendations have so far not been implemented in that region. Regarding the rampant corruption prevailing there, are you going to get it inquired? Are you going to give jobs to the local people there?

SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH: I have said that three of the recommendations/suggestions have been implemented. And the fourth recommendation, under which work is being given continuously.

[English]

MR SPEAKER: Please listen to the answer.

[Translation]

SHRI DATTA MEGHE: How can the Minister give a wrong reply? Our voters are aware and ask us questions. Reply to what I have asked. If you do not know, then say so.

SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH: Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding the question raised by him, I am saying what I know which is based on what we have implemented. If the hon. Member is not satisfied, he can talk to me whenever he so desires. I am here for that.

[English]

SHRI SUDHIR GIRI: Mr Speaker, Sir, the sixth recommendation of the Bureau of Industrial Costs and Prices indicated that subsidies on sale of soft coke should not be in CIL account. This recommendation has been rejected by the Government.

May I, therefore, know from the hon. Minister what are the causes inspiring the Government to reject outright the recommendation of the Expert Committee?

[Translation]

SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH: Since soft coke is consumed by the people of the weaker sections, it was not accepted.

Indo-Pak Talks

*62. SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state

(a) whether the Prime Minister of Pakistan made an unconditional offer recently for resumption of Indo-Pak talks

(b) if so, the details of the offer and the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether the Government had proposed Foreign Secretary level talks with that country to solve various bilateral issues;

(d) if so, the details thereof, and the reaction of Pakistan thereto; and

(e) the steps being taken/proposed to be taken to resume bilateral talks with Pakistan?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I. K. GUJRAL): (a) to (e) In her message of felicitations to our Prime Minister on his assumption of office, the Prime Minister of Pakistan urged that India and Pakistan should sit across the table in a search for lasting peace. In his reply, dated June 8, 1996, PM suggested that the two countries undertake a wide-ranging and comprehensive dialogue and resume the Foreign Secretary level talks. PM underlined that bilateral approaches and agreements which have been devised earlier could guide future exchanges on all matters, including those on which the two countries might have differing perceptions. PM also emphasised that efforts should be directed towards pulling down the barriers which have made people-to-people interaction between the two countries difficult and to encourage the promotion of trade, economic and cultural contacts. Pakistan's response to PM's letter to the Prime Minister of Pakistan is awaited.

[Translation]

SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is for the first time that the Pakistan Government has proposed to resume talks with Indian Government. A mention about the election manifesto of the Janta Dal which is an ally of the United Front, has been made in the greetings sent by the Pakistani Prime Minister Shrimati Benazir Bhutto to our Prime Minister. She has felt encouraged by it. She has said that her Government has been encouraged by the mention made by the Janta Dal in its election manifesto that talks over the issue of Kashmir would be resumed keeping in view the feelings of the people of the state. In 1994, the secretary level talks were discontinued and Pakistan was held responsible for that because of its rigid stand. Pakistan was not

ready to agree at any point on any condition. It had laid down several conditions in which the main were that India should withdraw its forces from Kashmir, the alleged violation of human rights committed by India should be stopped. Besides, it was also said that international observers may be appointed in Kashmir and imprisoned terrorists may be released. Is it true that both the Governments would make efforts to resume bilateral talks keeping in mind the present political situation in both the countries? You have said in your reply that the reaction of the Pakistan Government to the letter sent by our Prime Minister to the Prime Minister of Pakistan is yet to be received. To what extent she is satisfied and encouraged by your answer?

MR SPEAKER : This is question hour. Please ask the question.

SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH : This is a serious issue and is related to the safety, unity and integrity of India

MR SPEAKER : Of course, it is but you ask question

SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH : Kashmir is the root cause of all our disputes with Pakistan. Therefore, atleast, something has to be mentioned about it. I would like to ask from the hon'ble Minister whether Pakistan has formally or informally, laid down any pre-conditions for resuming talks? The second part of my question is whether India would make it clear to the Pakistan that to resume dialogue in a cordial atmosphere, it has to ensure and clearly make efforts to stop providing moral, political and arms assistance to the terrorists? Even today, four foreign hostages are in their captivity. What will be the fate of those hostages?

[English]

MR SPEAKER : You have taken five minutes. Please ask your question.

SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH : Sir, I have put my supplementaries (a) and (b) to the Minister just now.

MR SPEAKER : You put (a) to (z) in one sentence please.

SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH : No, Sir. I will ask my second supplementary as (c).

SHRI I K GUJRAL : Sir, if I have understood the question rightly my hon. friend wants to know whether Pakistan has suggested any pre-conditions for talks or not. My reply is that we are awaiting the reply. We have not received any communication as yet.

[Translation]

SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH : Sir, they have not received any communication as yet. Therefore they do not know as to whether Pakistan would lay any pre condition or not. But the stand of the Government of India should be clear as to whether it would resume

talks with some conditions or without any condition. My second supplementary question is that today, the hurdles coming in the way of Indo-Pak relations can be removed by streamlining the visa procedure and by exchanging trade and cultural agreements. For example, Pakistan is presently purchasing sugar from international market at exorbitant prices and India has plenty of sugar to sell to Pakistan at low rates. I would like to ask from the Government as to whether while holding talks with Pakistan, it would suggest to promote our cultural and trade relations and to simplify visa procedures to facilitate visits of people in both the countries.

[English]

SHRI I K GUJRAL : Sir, I think my hon. friend will agree that for us to try to foresee what we are going to say in the talks may not be advisable from our point of view.

[Translation]

SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon'ble Minister has not given answer to my question. There is no point in asking a question. Benazir Bhutto is not responding to him and similarly he is not replying here.

[English]

SHRI RAGHUNANDAN LAL BHATIA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it has been the endeavour of all the Indian Governments to have good relations with Pakistan and many efforts have been made in the past in this regard. I would like to say that during Shri Narasimha Rao's period, he, as the Prime Minister of India, met the Prime Minister of Pakistan Shri Nawaz Sharif six times and later when Shrimati Bhutto was elected as the Prime Minister of Pakistan, I was sent as a special envoy of the Prime Minister of India to have talks with her. But unfortunately there is no forward movement in the relations between the two Governments. Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he has formulated any policy towards Pakistan. In this regard, I would also like to know whether he has talked to all the leaders of the Opposition to form a consensus and whether any measures has been offered or is likely to be offered to Pakistan by which Pakistan may be attracted to have talks with India.

SHRI I K GUJRAL : Sir, my hon. friend, I appreciate, has been dealing with the subject. I appreciate the efforts that he has been making and Shri Narasimha Rao has been making in the past. I think fortunately in India's context some sort of a consensus exists among all the parties here on foreign policy and that is a welcome thing.

So far as questions like what line we shall pursue, how we shall proceed ahead are concerned as I said very briefly a while ago, we have taken two initiatives. One is that we have responded to the letter. The second initiative is that at people-to-people

level we have taken several steps to relax the situation. This also is meant as a message. I think, at this stage, for me to say as to what type of discussions will go on will be a sort of foreseeing something which I should not do.

SHRI ROOPCHAND PAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, even as Pakistan's response to the Prime Minister's letter to the Prime Minister of Pakistan is awaited, I would like to know whether the Government of India has made any study as to the concrete steps that are urgently required to be taken in the meantime so that a new relationship can develop between the two countries.

In the light of the decision taken by the SAARC in respect of cultural contacts, I would like to know whether the Government feels that this may help pave the way for better cultural contacts preceding the promotion of trade and other economic relations.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL : Sir, I will take the second point first. So far as the trade relations are concerned, my hon. friend would recall that the SAARC has tried to set up an organisation called SAPTA. I think all the countries of this region have contributed for that. SAPTA has now been operationalised and we are fast moving towards it. I do hope that in that framework trade between India and Pakistan will also improve. It is, I think, not only in our interest but it is in the interest of everybody in the region. That is why we encouraged the idea and appreciated it.

Recently, the Commerce Minister of Pakistan said that he would like to segregate the political and economic relations which is by itself a good thing. I must also say that we have taken several steps unilaterally to try to create an atmosphere of amity and friendship. For instance, we have relaxed the visa considerably. We have also invited some journalists to India. We have also suggested that we can set up temporary visa camps in Karachi if we are so permitted and so on and so forth. We are also examining how to relax the restrictions, if any, about import of journals and books in this country.

We are doing all these things unilaterally. We are not bothering whether they would respond or not. Our effort continues to be - as we have said in the letter also - to see that any barriers that exist for people to people contact, for interaction, for travel are removed. We have requested the hon. Speaker to invite a Parliamentary delegation from Pakistan and I think the Speaker is inviting a Parliamentary delegation from Pakistan to establish relationship between our two Parliaments. We are extending these gestures in the hope and wish that India and Pakistan will live as good neighbours.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are news reports that the US Government is seeking mediation in the Indo-Pak dispute. At one point of time, Pakistan was also favourable to the

American mediation. I want to know whether the Pakistan Government is still in favour of American mediation or they want to settle the dispute bilaterally without any outside interference.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL : Sir, I think once for all the Shimla Agreement had moved both of us away from any third party intervention or mediation or whatever it is called. Whatever relations or whatever talks have to develop, have to be in the bilateral framework.

SHRI JAG MOHAN : Sir, my question is whether the hon. Minister of External Affairs is reading in between the lines the statement made by the American Ambassador in Pakistan while addressing the Command Unit there. He made certain observations. Reading in between those lines I want to know if he considers that there are certain forces and interests—foreign interests who are not very friendly to India. They are encouraging certain forces both in the Pakistan occupied Kashmir and Kashmir to prop up semi-independence or forces which want to create an independent Kashmir or a semi-independent Kashmir. By talking of maximum autonomy or autonomy short of azadi the Government of India wittingly or unwittingly is falling into there trap.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL : Sir, my hon. friend is a very knowledgeable person and he particularly specialised in reading between the lines which I do not. I go by the word of what is written. Whatever the American Ambassador may or may not have said in this context I do not think it conflicts with our bilateral approach. So I have not taken any notice of that. So far as the other issue of giving autonomy is concerned, that is an internal affair which we will decide in consultation with all the parties.

[Translation]

SHRI MUKHTAR ANIS : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon'ble Minister of External Affairs has said that the Government of India would try to establish relations between the people of India and Pakistan. I would like to ask from the hon'ble Minister as to whether the Government would consider to reopen the closed consulate office in Karachi as a result of which it has become very difficult for the thousands of Muhajirs to visit India? My second question is that it has been assured to do a lot for the books which are being published there are also for cultural programmes taking place there. Sir, I have written many times to some famous writers and also for sending some books which are published there but they are facing a lot of difficulties in sending books to India. Whether the Government of India has made any concrete programme for allowing those persons to visit Pakistan who want to participate in the cultural activities of that country and similarly inviting Pakistani people here for the same purpose to establish cordial relations between the people of

both the countries? My third question is that when we discuss about the relations between India and Pakistan, we should keep in mind that these relations are of two countries, of two brothers and they are not our enemy...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR SPEAKER : Please ask the question; you are giving the suggestions.

[Translation]

SHRI MUKHTAR ANIS : I would like to ask from the hon'ble Minister whether relations would be maintained on the basis of political considerations?

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL : In reply to the question asked by my dear friend, as far as the question of opening of a consulate is concerned, I would like to tell that we will open that office only when they will allow us to do so. We cannot take any decision unilaterally in this regard. But we are certainly trying for that. You might have seen that we have relaxed visa formalities considerably for those who wish to visit India. As far as the matter regarding books is concerned, if there is any such rule which prevents their arrival into India, please bring it to my notice, we are ready to amend it suitably. Nothing has come to my notice as yet due to which there is some difficulty in bringing books or newspaper in India. However, we would try to ascertain whether there is any such rule and if it comes to my notice we would try to remove it. As far as the question of visitors is concerned, they are most welcome. Whosoever wants to come here, he can come without any restrictions. This country is open to all. We are quite liberal in such matters...*(Interruptions)* Whosoever wants to come here, we would welcome him...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SÂTYA DEO SINGH : Let there be liberalism to the hilt...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR SPEAKER : I have called the name of Dr Rongpi. You do not have to exchange like that.

DR JAYANTA RONGPI : Mr Speaker, Sir, after the break down of Indo-Pak talks in the recent past, it is indeed a very positive step that Pakistan has expressed its willingness for a mutual dialogue. Our Prime Minister also has emphasised people to people interactions and promotion of trade and cultural exchanges. It is indeed a positive step.

I want to know from the hon. Minister whether, in view of India's comparatively advantageous position and the strength of human resources—military or social composition—the Government of India would offer a 'No War Pact' to Pakistan to strengthen our friendship with them and to usher in an era of peace and brotherhood in the sub-continent.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL : My hon. friend has asked me to spell out what I shall offer or what I shall not offer. I think, this is not the occasion for me to react to that. The Prime Minister of India has offered that we are willing to discuss every subject in the world. It includes what he is saying. Therefore, whenever the talks take place, we will also go with a great deal of hope and optimism into the talks.

Inter-state Water Dispute

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*63. DR T SUBBARAMI REDDY :
SHRI N. DENNIS :

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether there are inter-state water disputes between Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka and various other States for the last so many years;

(b) if so, whether the Government have worked out any policy decision and common minimum programme for solving these disputes, and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) Yes, Sir. At present there are two inter-state water disputes namely -

1. Cauvery Water Disputes and
2. Ravi-Beas Water Disputes

(b) and (c) : As per the existing practice, efforts are made to solve the water disputes through negotiations with the basin States. In case the efforts do not fructify and if any one of the basin States approaches the Central Government to set up a Tribunal, the same is set up under Inter State Water Disputes Act, 1956 to adjudicate. There is also a proposal for adopting National Policy Guidelines for water sharing.

[English]

DR T SUBBARAMI REDDY : Mr Speaker, Sir, the National Water Resources Council was set up in 1983 headed by the Prime Minister. Its Vice-Chairman was the Union Minister. The Chief Ministers of the respective States were its members. In 1990 also they set up a National Water Board to settle the disputes and to go through all the transactions of inter-State waters. But to my surprise, you have given clarification merely on Cauveri Water dispute and Ravi Beas Water dispute. Nothing else is there. It is not correct. You remember that even in those days Pandit Jawaharlal Nehruji said that irrigation projects were the modern temples. This National Water Resources Council was set up with the same inspiration only with the Prime Minister as its