

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:46

ANSWERED ON:07.07.2004

PEACE TALKS WITH PAKISTAN

Nair Shri P.K. Vasudevan;Tripathy Shri Braja Kishore

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Foreign Secretary level talks were held between India and Pakistan recently ;
- (b) if so, the issues discussed and the outcome thereof ;
- (c) whether the talks have been held recently between the two countries on Nuclear Confidence Building Measures;
- (d) if so, the details thereof ;
- (e) whether the Indian Government has agreed to set up a hot line with Pakistan for regular communications ;
- (f) if so, the details in this regard ;
- (g) whether External Affairs Ministers of both the countries met recently ;
- (h) if so, the details of the discussion held; and
- (i) the extent to which these are likely to improve the bilateral relations between the two countries?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a) to (i) A statement is placed on the Table of the House.

Statement as referred to in reply to Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 46 (Priority VI) for answer on 7.7.2004, regarding `Peace Talks with Pakistan`

(a) and (b) Foreign Secretary level talks between India and Pakistan were held in New Delhi on June 27 -28, 2004. They exchanged views on carrying the process forward in an atmosphere free from terrorism and violence. In the Joint Statement issued at the end of the talks on June 28, the Foreign Secretaries, inter alia, approved the measures recommended by the Expert level meeting on Nuclear CBMs in New Delhi on 19-20 June, 2004. The two sides proposed a comprehensive framework for conventional CBMs aimed at initiating and enhancing communication, coordination and interaction. It was also agreed to immediately restore the strength of the respective High Commissions to the original level of 110; to immediately release all apprehended fishermen in each other's custody and put in place a mechanism for the return of unintentionally transgressing fishermen and their boats from high seas without apprehending them; and to initiate steps for early release of civilian prisoners. It was also agreed in principle to re-establish the Consulates General in Karachi and Mumbai.

(c) and (d) An Expert level meeting on Nuclear Confidence Building Measures was held in New Delhi on June 19 -20, 2004. The Joint Statement issued after the meeting on June 20 was significant in identifying areas of convergence; working out CBMs on communication links to be implemented; working towards concluding an Agreement with technical parameters on pre-notification of flight testing of missiles, a draft of which was handed over by the Indian side; and a joint call for working level discussions along with other nuclear powers.

(e)and(f) During the Expert Level Meeting on Nuclear CBMs the two sides agreed that the existing hotline between the DGMOs would be upgraded, dedicated and secured, and that a dedicated and secure hotline would be established between the two Foreign Secretaries through their respective Foreign Offices to prevent misunderstandings and reduce risks relevant to Nuclear issues.

(g) and (h) External Affairs Minister Mr. K. Natwar Singh and Pakistan Foreign Minister Mr. Khurshid M. Kasuri met in Qingdao on June 21, 2004 on the margins of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue meeting. The two Ministers reviewed the progress in all aspects of bilateral relations, and implementation of the framework for the dialogue process worked out in February 2004 by the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries. They assessed positively the progress in the discussions held, including at the meetings between BSF and Pakistan Rangers, the Narcotics Control authorities of the two countries, and the Expert level dialogue on Nuclear CBMs. The two Ministers agreed to remain in regular touch and provide continued political guidance to the ongoing process.

(i) These interactions between India and Pakistan have been significant in exchanging views on carrying forward the ongoing process

of confidence building, cooperation and dialogue in an atmosphere free from the menace of terrorism and violence.