

14.07 hrs.

Title: Fruther discussion regarding recent summit-level talks held between India and Pakistan in Agra raised by Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav on the 24 July, 2001. (Not concluded)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR): Sir, I hope the entire House will share your view that we are discussing now a very important matter and we should treat this issue as a very important national issue. But, Sir, how does this Government treat this matter? Sir, the way they have been behaving, it seems that banality has overtaken this Government and it is indulging only in inanities. What is in the statement of the hon. Prime Minister that this country did not know? Sometimes, brevity has virtue. Sometimes it is not. The whole country is concerned. The entire country stood by the Prime Minister. But it seems that there is an exercise to suppress information. I do not know who prepared the speech. I do not know how far our able Foreign Minister had a role to play or still has a role to play. The most important information has been suppressed.

It seems, Sir, the Prime Minister is not concerned in taking the country and this House into full confidence regarding what had happened and why there was failure of these talks. However, this is a matter of great regret that in spite of genuine good wishes and longing for peace, tranquillity and good neighbourly relations between the peoples of the two countries who are neighbours, the Agra Summit has had an extremely disappointing end. Sir, we would not like to treat the talks as a total failure but it cannot be denied that the high hopes and aspirations of the people who were looking for some sort of normalisation of relations between the two countries have been dashed and their wishes remain unfulfilled.

At least we have achieved one thing, which, according to us, is of importance, namely by reason of the Summit, the two countries at the highest level have sat across the table. They have come to know each other. I do not know how well. At least, they have met and talked, which, we sincerely hope, will ultimately pave the way for a better understanding and closer relationship between the two countries and the leaders of the two countries.

As for people like us, we feel that there is no alternative to dialogue; and, not only dialogue it cannot be a single instance but it has to be a continuous affair.

In view of the nature of the problems that have been besetting us and the situation that has been prevailing over fifty years, it would have been naïve to expect unanimity at the first meeting between the two leaders or a lasting solution in one meeting. Therefore, we feel that the talks should continue. We, from this House, - I believe other hon. Members will join me - appeal to the Governments and leaders of the two countries to make all serious and sincere attempts to improve the bilateral relations so that a conducive atmosphere is created for the resumption of talks and ultimately for a solution.

In this sub-continent, between our two countries, even after nearly 54 years of Independence, our problems are common: the problems of poverty, the problems of illiteracy, the problems of lack of development, lack of employment and lack of industrial progress. This is the common experience of the people of both the countries. But instead of striving for peace and friendship, the two countries have been indulging in bloodshed. I am not saying that we have any responsibility for that. But the situation has been that there has been misery and spilling of blood for the people. Therefore, we feel that the people of these two countries have a vested interest in peace and friendship. That is what we should strive for. Ultimately we shall be targeting normalisation of relations in a friendly atmosphere between the two countries.

As there is no substitute to dialogue, we hope the hon. Prime Minister will visit Pakistan to continue the process, however muted it has been so far so that the process that has been initiated would continue. We have no doubt that the unyielding stance of the President of Pakistan, if not intransigence, has dominantly contributed to the failure of the Summit. Unfortunately, the President of Pakistan primarily wanted to discuss Kashmir and to him all other issues were linked to Kashmir. As a matter of fact, even before coming to this country, he had been carrying on a relentless campaign or propaganda through the media stating that the core issue was Kashmir. His meeting with the representatives of the Hurriyat Conference clearly emphasised his obsession with Kashmir, which he pursued at the risk of the failure of the Summit.

We have no doubt - and it is very clear - that unfortunately Pakistan is still guiding its principles and policies on the two-nation theory, which is not acceptable to secular India. We cannot be mere bystanders when Pakistan continues to support and encourage cross-border terrorism, which has cost thousands of innocent lives in our country, in the Valley. The insurgents and the killers are trained in Pakistan and are sent to our country and they indulge in widespread violence and killings.

These also include Afghani militants who are talibanising Afghanistan. We can never accept these marauders as freedom fighters nor they can be compared to Palestinians who are fighting for their homeland.

Sir, we are one here, I believe, that this country rightly and correctly wanted to discuss all issues apart from Kashmir during the Summit – the important issues like cross-border terrorism and, what we have been advocating, trade and commerce, cultural exchanges between the people, release of prisoners of war, people who are in jails, etc.

Our Party has always emphasised that the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration should not be jettisoned for the Summit and all discussions should be held on that foundation. We are committed to this; the whole country and the House are committed that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India and shall ever remain so. The ordinary and the common people of Jammu and Kashmir have fought against armed infiltration from Pakistan. They have made tremendous sacrifices, yet they have legitimised their accession to India by openly and enthusiastically participating in the elections that have been held.

Sir, we should remember one very important thing in this country, particularly in the situation that the people of Jammu and Kashmir have rejected religion to be the deciding factor. That is a great thing. We can never let down, those who have fought bitterly and are still fighting bitterly against heavy odds.

Sir, in this background, what we feel is that even if initially non-conclusive, we should continue our effort to have dialogues at different levels, as bilateral dialogue is essential to sort out the outstanding problems between the two countries.

Sir, as you have also pointed out earlier, there is no other forum now. Even the SAARC forum is not available where the leaders of the two countries can meet and discuss even informally. Now both of us are nuclear powers and we cannot take the risk of another war. It cannot even be dreamt of. We have seen earlier how they have resulted in misery. War with conventional weapons has only meant destruction of lives and properties, with no benefit to Pakistan.

Sir, the Government should note that the entire spectrum of political forces in this country had hailed the Summit, there was tremendous amount of goodwill for the success of the talks. But, Sir, even then it failed. We must evaluate whether the Government was able to rise to the occasion and whether the Government had the statesmanship, the capacity and the expertise to deal with the situation.

Sir, I cannot but charge this Government of having failed abjectly and comprehensively to act like a matured nation and it gave the impression that this Government can only react to the situation that may develop, but can never control the situation themselves. Even if I do not say that the Government was taken for a ride by Pakistan, but we behaved almost like onlookers, overawed by the spectacle that was taking place, and groping for direction.

Sir, why did it happen so? Why did this country of one billion people with supposedly experienced leadership behave with such naivety and amateurish ineptitude? I believe the Summit has established how unprofessionally

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (RAIGANJ): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am sorry to interrupt. I just heard the news – it is not confirmed – that one of our distinguished Members, Shrimati Phoolan Devi is shot. I do not know how far it is true. I got the news from media sources. ...*(Interruptions)* The Lok Sabha Secretariat should check it up immediately.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Yes. Was she shot dead? It should be checked up immediately. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : She was in the House in the morning. In fact, I have talked to her at the door in the Lobby. ...*(Interruptions)* She was here in the morning.

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU (SRIKAKULAM): Sir, it is better to verify this news. In fact, the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs should verify as to how it has happened. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : I think officially the House should inform us. The Secretariat or the Government should find out and inform us. ...*(Interruptions)* She was in the Lobby in the morning.

MR. SPEAKER : Let me verify it.

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): Sir, the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs has gone to verify the matter.

SHRI ANIL BASU (ARAMBAGH): It is already a confirmed news. The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs has gone to get the news confirmed from outside. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : I got the news from media sources.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Dasmunsi, the hon. Minister is coming.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): Sir, I just heard a flash on Doordarshan that the hon. Member of this House, Shrimati Phoolan Devi has been shot dead at Ashok Road here. ...*(Interruptions)* But I have to get it confirmed. I heard it personally on Doordarshan.

Sir, I request you to adjourn the House for some time.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Yes, we can adjourn for ten minutes.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : You have to first confirm it officially.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: I will have to confirm it. I have myself heard it on Doordarshan.

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU : The House can be adjourned for five or ten minutes.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : It should be till the news is officially confirmed.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Sir, let us adjourn for half-an-hour and we can meet at 3 o' clock. By that time I will get the news.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Yes, we agree to it.

MR. SPEAKER : The House stands adjourned to meet at 3 p.m.

1423 hours

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till
Fifteen of the Clock.*

1500 hrs.

लोक सभा 1500 बजे पुनः समवेत हुई।

(अध्यक्ष महोदय पीठासीन हुए)