

MR. SPEAKER: The question is:

"That this House do agree with the Fiftieth Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the Home on the 30th April, 2003."

The motion was adopted.

12.09 hrs.

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER*

Recent Developments regarding Indo-Pak relations

[Translation]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I received a telephone call on the evening of 28th April, from Shri Jamali, P.M. of Pakistan.

P.M. Shri Jamali conveyed his appreciation and thanks for the comments I had made in Srinagar and my remarks about India-Pakistan relations contained in my statement in the two Houses of Parliament. He also condemned terrorism.

As hon. Members are aware, we are committed to the improvement of relations with Pakistan, and are willing to grasp every opportunity for doing so. However, we have repeatedly expressed the need to create a conducive atmosphere for a sustained dialogue, which necessary requires an end to cross border terrorism and the dismantling of its infrastructure.

We discussed ways of carrying forward our bilateral relations. In this regard, I emphasized the importance of economic cooperation, cultural exchanges, people-to-people contacts and civil aviation links. These would create an environment in which difficult issues in our bilateral relations could be addressed. PM Jamali suggested resumption of sporting links between the two countries. We agreed that, as a beginning, these measures could be considered.

In this context, it has been decided to appoint a High Commissioner to Pakistan and to restore the civil aviation links on a reciprocal basis.

I also emphasized the importance of substantive progress on the decisions for regional trade and economic cooperation taken at the SAARC Kathmandu Summit. Agreements arrived at Kathmandu must be implemented....(Interruptions)

*[Placed in Library. See No. L.T. 7624/2003]

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: The normal practice has been that we do not permit questions on such type of statements. In our House there is no practice of allowing such questions.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

KUNWAR AKHILESH SINGH (Maharajanj, U.P.): Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a serious subject. Entire country is concerned over it. Pakistan is encouraging terrorism unabatedly and providing chemical weapons to the terrorists. What is the rationale behind holding talks with Pakistan in such a situation. ... (Interruptions)

SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA (Khiri): Parliament had passed a resolution in this regard. ... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: If you want to discuss this issue, you can come to the Business Advisory Committee and get the time. But, as a very special case. I am permitting Shri Shivraj Patil to put a question.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: The Prime Minister has to go to the other House at 12.30 p.m. So, please do not take the time of the House unnecessarily by interruptions.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

KUNWAR AKHILESH SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, permission be given to ask questions from the hon. Prime Minister.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Now, please sit down. If we get the time, you will be allowed to ask a question.

[Translation]

Why are you wasting the time of the House in this manner.

[English]

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL (Latur): The Leader of the Opposition and the Congress Party have been saying that dialogue is one of the routes which has to be taken

by our country to solve the problem between India and Pakistan. Having said this, I would request yourself that this issue should be taken up on the floor of the House and all other hon. Members also should be allowed to make their statements at a later stage, convenient to both the sides.

I have one or two questions to ask the hon. Prime Minister and I hope that he would enlighten us on these questions. Gen. Jay Garner is alleged to have made a statement with regard to the Kashmir issue. It is reported in *The Indian Express* and *Asian Age*. I seek your permission to read out a portion of it to the House.

"We will ensure that a permanent solution of the perennial Kashmir problem is in place by December 2004 at the latest. US Government has decided to solve this problem once and for all. South Asia is the world's most volatile region, especially because of the proven weapons of mass destruction it possesses. It is even more dangerous than North Korea because of the history. A Kashmir roadmap will follow in the wake of the West Asia roadmap aimed at resolving the Palestinian issue."

Has the Government seen this report? Would the Government ascertain if such a statement has been made, and what would be the reaction of the Government to such a statement, if it is true?

We would request the hon. Prime Minister to enlighten us on this issue. This has relevance to the talk between India and Pakistan.

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, House will always be taken into confidence regarding the ongoing talks with Pakistan, Government do not intend to conceal anything. However the insistence to reveal all, which is being discussed will not be of any help in the discussion. I am ready to hold a discussion on Indo-Pak relations if the House wants so and it is upto Mr. Speaker to allot time for it.

MR. SPEAKER: Business Advisory Committee is also there.

KUNWAR AKHILESH SINGH: The House accepts the proposal of hon. Prime Minister to hold a discussion on it next week.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: You have to give the assurance that the number of Members present during the discussion should be fairly large.

Shri Patil Saheb has asked a question and has quoted some General Saheb. I have also seen that quote. I have tried to find out the truth regarding it. It will not be right to say that it is the attitude of the United States of America. Several speculations are being made at present. Several persons want to play the role of mediator but they are not clear about as to why and how they want to mediate. India consider the Kashmir issue as bilateral one and the intervention of a third party is neither desirable nor acceptable to us...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: When Prime Minister has said here that firstly it will be approved by the Business Advisory Committee then it will be discussed. Right now, what is the need to raise questions on it. The Bill presented by Shri Arun Jaitley is to be introduced first, and Zero Hour would follow.

...(Interruptions)

12.19 hrs.

CONSTITUTION (NINETY-SIXTH AMENDMENT) BILL, 2003*

(Amendment of articles 81, 82, 170 and 330)

[English]

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE AND MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India.

MR. SPEAKER: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India."

The motion was adopted

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: I introduce** the Bill.

*Published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part-II, Section-2, dated 2.5.2003.

**Introduced with the Recommendation of the President.