

[English]

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am making a statement on the Fifth SAARC Summit. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SAMARENDRA KUNDU (Balasore): He should say something on the assault on the workers. (*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: You may speak later
(*Interruptions*)

12.56 hrs.

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER

Fifth SAARC Summit at Male

[English]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR): I visited Maldives to participate in the Fifth SAARC Summit from the 21st to the 23rd November, 1990. The outcome of the Summit is incorporated in the Male Declaration and the Joint Press Release issued at the end of the Summit. Copies of these documents are laid on the Table of the House. [Placed in Library, See No LT — 1905/91]

During my stay in Maldives, I had bilateral discussions with former President Ershad of Bangladesh, President Gayoom of Maldives, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan and Prime Minister Wijetunga of Sri Lanka. I also had the pleasure of meeting in Male His Majesty the King of Bhutan and Prime Minister Bhattarai of Nepal, but detailed bilateral talks with them were held after their arrival in New Delhi immediately after the Summit.

India took a number of initiatives at the Summit and the meetings preceding it, all of which were accepted and are reflected in the

Male Declaration and the Joint Press Release.

At our suggestion, regional cooperation under SAARC has been extended to the field of biotechnology.

Our proposal to create a Fund for the identification and development of regional projects, to be financed by national development banks of the member-countries, was also accepted. We will host a meeting of the representatives of these banks to work out the precise modalities for the operation of the Fund.

India will also host the Second Ministerial Meeting on International Economic Issues to review the outcome of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations and to coordinate the positions of the member-countries at the forthcoming UN Conference on Environment and Development. It was agreed that the same Ministerial meeting would also prepare a strategy for mobilising regional resources which would encourage and strengthen individual and collective self-reliance in the region.

We also suggested, and it was decided, that measures for establishing joint ventures in the field of cottage industries and handicrafts should be taken forthwith to set a stage for promoting collective self-reliance in the region.

A major decision taken at the Summit was to establish three additional regional centres, namely, the Centre for Human Resource Development in Pakistan, the SAARC Documentation Centre in India and the SAARC Tuberculosis Centre in Nepal. We are taking necessary steps expeditiously to set up the SAARC Documentation Centre in India.

There were several other significant achievements at the SAARC Summit. We agreed to increase tourism to the region. We decided to facilitate greater contacts among our newspaper federations. We announced the 1990 as the Decade of the Girl Child. We

[Sh. Chander Shekhar]

launched a SAARC Travel Document to enable visa-free travel for some categories of people. Our Foreign Ministers signed an important Regional Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

My discussions with President Gayoom were very cordial and friendly. We have no bilateral problems between us and mainly discussed some of the major projects of mutual cooperation on which there was complete identity of views. President Gayoom was kind enough to accept my invitation to visit India. The visit will take place soon.

In my bilateral talks with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, was impressed by his positive approach. He showed an awareness of the cost of both the countries of continuing an adversarial relationship as well as of the benefits inherent in a cooperative relationship. I fully reciprocated his sentiments and sought his cooperation in restoring trust and confidence between our two countries.

I expressed our concern at continuing support from across the border to terrorism in the States of Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir. I emphasised that this is a serious irritant in our relations. We agreed that all differences between India and Pakistan should be resolved peacefully and through dialogue and that the process of reconvening discussions on the various pending issues should be resumed.

Consequent upon our meeting, the Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan have met and made progress towards reaching agreement on several confidence building measures to reduce tension in our relations. They have also determined the time-table for the resumption of discussions on issues such as the demarcation of the land boundary at Sir Creek, the Tulbul Navigation Project and the meetings of the Sub-Commissions.

In my meeting with the Prime Minister Wejetunga I expressed our concern at the

continuing ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, involving heavy casualties on both sides, including civilian casualties, and the resultant influx of refugees into India. I also emphasised that the Government of Sri Lanka should take measures for arresting and reversing the flow of refugees to India and create conditions for their early return to Sri Lanka. We also discussed the possibility of expanding our cooperation in the trade and economic field.

13.00 hrs.

Before concluding, I would like to reiterate India's commitment to South Asian cooperation under SAARC. This is essential for accelerating our economic development, for building individual and collective self-reliance and for enhancing our bargaining strength in multilateral negotiations. Such cooperation has become all the more necessary in the context of the present trend towards economic integration in the world. The Male Summit has substantial achievements to its credit. SAARC is now poised for launching itself upon the path of cooperation in the hard-core economic areas like trade, industry, energy, money, finance and environment. What is needed is the political will to move confidently in these new areas. Consistent with its size, resources and stage of development, India would continue to assume responsibility, and even make sacrifices, where necessary, to make SAARC an effective and full-fledged venture of regional cooperation.

FIFTH SAARCH SUMMIT

FIFTH MEETING OF THE HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT

MALE DECLARATION

The Male' Declaration of the Heads of State or Government of the Member Countries of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation issued on 23rd November, 1990.

The President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, His Excellency Mr. Hussain