

Regional Conferences of Overseas Indians

6807. SHRI YADVENDRA DATT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received from overseas Indians a suggestion for organising regional conferences of overseas Indians; and

(b) if so, whether Government have agreed to extend co-operation and assistance in the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) and (b). Although some suggestions, in this regard, have been made by overseas Indians, no specific request has been received by the Government.

Ferry Service Between Rameswaram and Sri Lanka

6808. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any representation for resumption of the ferry service between Rameswaram and Sri Lanka;

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

(c) whether Sri Lanka has reciprocated by introducing service on this route?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN): (a) and (b). Government have received no recent formal request from the Sri Lanka Govt. to re-introduce the ferry service between Rameswaram and Sri Lanka. Govt. may consider the reintroduction of the ferry serv-

ice at the appropriate time. The resumption of the ferry service has to be a joint decision of both Governments of India and Sri Lanka and cannot be taken unilaterally.

(c) Government have no information as to whether the Govt. of Sri Lanka have plans to introduce a ferry service on this route.

Grant of Asylum to Indians

6809. SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state the number of Indian nationals who have been granted asylum in China, Japan, Indonesia and Malaysia during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): None.

Applications for Grant of 'Swatantrata Senani Samman Pension'

6810. SHRI RAJVEER SINGH: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of fresh applications for grant of 'Swatantrata Senani Samman Pension', received from Uttar Pradesh during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) the number of cases disposed of during the last three years;

(c) the number of cases still pending; and

(d) the steps taken to decide the pending cases expeditiously?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) The number of fresh applications received from Uttar Pradesh during the last three years of 1987,

1988 and 1989 are 369, 349 and 503 respectively.

(b) and (c). Applications received after the last date viz. 31.3. 1982 are treated as delayed applications. Such applications are considered only where they are accompanied by evidence of suffering from official records and the applicant given adequate reasons for delay in applying. Where the applicant furnishes such evidence, the claim of the applicant is verified through the State Government and pension sanctioned to the applicant if, upon such verification, the same is found to be genuine. Other cases, including the cases where no evidence from official records has been furnished by the applicant, are rejected. No separate record is maintained for disposal of delayed applications.

(d) Action is taken to dispose of the pending case(s) as soon as the verification report from the State Government is received.

Allegations Against Indian Intelligence Services About Explosion in Air India's 'Kanishka'

6811. SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA:
SHRI L.K. ADVANI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Governments' attention has been drawn to the allegation against some agents of Indian intelligence services, made in the book 'Soft Target' written by Canada-based two journalists about the mid air explosion in Air India's Kanishka in June, 1985;

(b) if so, the facts in this regard; and

(c) the action taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The book entitled "Soft Target-How the Indian Intelligence Service Penetrated Canada" by Zuhair Kashmeri and Brian Mc Andrew, two Canadian journalists, was released in Canada on June 23, 1989, to coincide with the 4th anniversary of the blowing of the Air India's aircraft 'Kanishka' in June 1985. In the book, the authors have alleged that the Air India aircraft was blown by the Indian intelligence agencies to discredit the Sikhs living in Canada.

(c) These baseless allegations were refuted by the Indian High Commission in Canada through the press, radio and TV. The concern of the Government of India regarding the allegations contained in the book were also conveyed to the Canadian Government.

Suicide by Indians in Kuwait

6812. DR. DAULATRAO SONUJI AHER: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indians in Kuwait who have committed suicide during the year 1988 and 1989;

(b) the reasons therefore; and

(c) the steps, if any, taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) According to information available with the Government, there were two suicides in 1988 and three in 1989.

(b) and (c). It is understood that this extreme step was taken for personal and