

LOK SABHA

Thursday, February 22, 1973/
Phalguna 3, 1894 (Saka).

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of
the Clock.

[MR SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Invitation to Prime Minister to Visit
Pakistan

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*41. SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD:
SHRI H. M. PATEL:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Pakistan President
has extended an invitation to Prime
Minister to visit Pakistan;

(b) whether the invitation has been
accepted, and

(c) if so, the probable date of the
visit and the subjects likely to figure
at the proposed meet?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS (SHRI SWARAN SINGH):
(a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD: It
is surprising that Mr. Bhutto, the
Pakistan President, not only through
the newspapers, but himself at meet-
ings has said that he has invited the
Indian Prime Minister to visit Pakis-
tan. It was not only the press and
the radio media but he himself has
said that. May I know what was the
content of the letter that he referred

to in regard to the invitation, in the
background of the Simla Pact?

SHRI SWARAN SINGH: I am as
surprised as the hon. Member is
about the press statements said to
have been made by President
Bhutto...

SHRI PILOO MODY: What about
the letter?

SHRI SWARAN SINGH: There has
been exchange of letters between
President Bhutto and Prime Minister
Indira Gandhi, and it is not normal
to divulge the contents of those
letters. But I have gone through those
letters carefully. No invitation has
been extended to our Prime Minis-
ter to visit Pakistan. It is true that
a suggestion had been made some-
what on these lines that if these mat-
ters could not be resolved, it would
be good if the President of Pakistan
and the Prime Minister of India could
meet. That is entirely different from
extending an invitation for a visit to
Pakistan.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD. The
Prime Minister and her delegation
had shown the maximum consider-
ation to the Pakistan President at
Simla. In view of this, may I know
whether the hon. Minister's attention
has been drawn to President Bhutto's
statement today wherein he has said
that any step for normalising relations
between the two countries must await
the return of the prisoners of war to
Pakistan, and if so, in the light of
this and also the suggestion by the
Prime Minister that the officials of
Pakistan and India should meet to
normalise the communications in air,
on water and on land, may I know
how the hon. Minister says that the
Simla spirit can be kept alive and nor-
mal relations can be restored?

SHRI SWARAN SINGH: I know that some of the statements made in Pakistan by Pakistan leaders are not helpful and they certainly are not in the spirit of the Simla Agreement. But we should continue to bind Pakistan to implementation of the Simla Agreement and we are proceeding on that basis.

SHRI POPATLAL M. JOSHI: It is a one-way traffic, Sir?

SHRI H. M. PATEL: The hon. Minister stated in this reply that there was a letter which merely stated that if these matters are not resolved, then it would be a good thing for the Prime Minister and Mr. Bhutto to meet. As other things have not been resolved, is it not then desirable that some such meeting should be held? Does it not mean that there is an invitation, though a conditional one?

MR. SPEAKER: The question was about an invitation and we are not going farther.

SHRI H. M. PATEL: It arises out of his reply that there was a conditional thing that if these matters are not resolved, there should be a meeting.

MR. SPEAKER: You can ask your neighbour to clarify it.

SHRI H. M. PATEL: I have no objection.

SHRI SWARAN SINGH: In principle, we are not opposed to a meeting. But we are of the view that before a meeting at the summit level takes place, there must be discussion or exchange of views or even a meeting at some other level, at officials level or even at Ministers' level to sort out the matters so that a summit meeting, if and when it takes place, does not end in confrontation but in a settlement of basic issues.

SHRI PILOO MODY: Is it the attitude of Government that everytime Mr. Bhutto and Shrimati Gandhi

meet, it must be a summit meeting? Could they not just meet as two individuals, as heads of State responsible for their own policies without it actually having to be a summit and, therefore, raising the expectations of the people that something must emerge out of the summit? Can there not be a dialogue at all levels, the ministerial level or official level or even at the level of heads of State without actually terming it as a summit meeting?

SHRI SWARAN SINGH: Whatever name you may give you may call it a summit, you may not call it a summit—when two heads of Government meet, it will be a summit meeting, because the Prime Minister of India's position is different from that of Shri Piloo Mody's. He can go and meet Mr. Bhutto.

SHRI PILOO MODY: I do not think the Prime Minister of India can ever aspire to acquiring my position.

SHRI SWARAN SINGH: I have already said that there can be a meeting at heads of Government level. For that some preparation is required. So this type of courtesy meeting or casual meeting, which has been referred to by Shri Piloo Mody, is not feasible and is not likely to yield any useful result in the present atmosphere, in the present state of relationship and given the pending problems between the two countries.

SHRI H. M. PATEL: If it is your desire to continue the dialogue, why not continue the dialogue?

SHRI SWARAN SINGH: The dialogue is continuing. We are in touch with Pakistan and there is exchange of views.

SHRI S. A. KADER: It is rumoured that the letter written by Mr. Bhutto was on the advice of Shri Piloo Mody. Is it a fact that are Government aware of it?

SHRI PILOO MODY: I do not want to be a maligned in this fashion.

SHRI SWARAN SINGH: I do not think that Mr Bhutto, with all the claims that Shri Piloo Mody makes, is likely to accept Shri Piloo Mody's advice

SHRI VASANT SATHE: In view of the fact that Mr. Bhutto has made the return of POWs a condition precedent to any further dialogue, will Government clarify the position that the question of return of POWs will not be decided unilaterally by India, unless Bangladesh also agrees to it, and therefore, Bangladesh's recognition by Pakistan will be a condition precedent to any other talk?

SHRI SWARAN SINGH: The Government's position has been made clear from time to time. As the surrender took place on the eastern side in Bangladesh territory to the joint command of India and Bangladesh, the association of Bangladesh and their agreement is necessary for a final settlement of the question of prisoners of war.

SHRI G VISWANATHAN: An impression has been created in the world that our Prime Minister is hesitating to accept an invitation from President Bhutto. I want to know from the Government whether we are prepared to keep the dialogue going on by our Prime Minister's meeting with President Bhutto without any pre-condition?

SHRI SWARAN SINGH: There is no impression created in the international community that Indian leaders or the Indian Government are reluctant to have meetings. I have said that we are prepared to meet at any level, but for a summit meeting to succeed there must be adequate preparation and adequate discussion at other levels. I do not think that there is any impression in any part of the world that India's Prime Minister is hesitating to meet President Bhutto.

डा० लक्ष्मीनारायण पाण्डेय : मंत्री महोदय ने कहा है कि पाकिस्तान सरकार के मुखिया प्रजीडेंट भुट्टो किसी भी प्रकार से भारत सरकार की बात शिमला समझौते के अन्तर्गत मानने के लिए तैयार नहीं हैं और बार बार उसका उल्लंघन कर रहे हैं, उसके ऊपर चलने को तैयार नहीं है। भुट्टो माहब ने प्रधान मंत्री को अपने उत्तर में लिखा है कि जब तक युद्धबंदियों की रिहाई का प्रश्न नहीं सुलझ जाता है तब तक वह किसी प्रकार की आगे चर्चा नहीं करेगे। ऐसी स्थिति में मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या हमारी सरकार अभी भी शिमला समझौते पर दृढ़ है ?

श्री स्वर्ण सिंह : जी हा, अगर पाकिस्तान खिसकना चाड़े शिमला एग्रीमेट में तो इसका यह मतलब नहीं कि हम भी खिसक जाए, बल्कि हम कोशिश करें कि वह भी न खिसके।

Demands Day Observed by P.F. Employees' Union

*42 **SHRI SAROJ MUKHERJEE:** Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state.

(a) whether the Provident Fund Employees' Union observed 17th November, 1972 as demands day;

(b) if so, what were their demands; and

(c) the steps taken to meet them?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI RAGHUNATHA REDDY): (a) to (c). A statement giving the information is laid on the Table of the Sabha. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-4220/73.]

SHRI SAROJ MUKHERJEE: The hon. Minister's replies have covered