

give them even a meal. It is against our entire ethos and culture! So we have to do something for them.

Addition of Ships to Coast Guard

*412 SHRI MOHANBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of ships operated by Coast Guard Organisation at present to check smuggling activities;

(b) whether these ships are not sufficient to cover all the zones; and

(c) if so, Government's plan to add more ships in the fleet with latest equipments fitted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) to (c). Assisting the Customs and other concerned authorities in anti-smuggling operations is one of the various duties assigned to the Coast Guard under the Coast Guard Act. The Coast Guard does not have a fleet earmarked for this purpose but utilises different types of available vessels to assist in anti-smuggling operations. Considering the vastness of the operational area and the variety of the other statutory responsibilities of the Coast Guard, its overall force level needs augmentation. This is being done within a phased programme and appropriately equipped vessels are planned to be acquired to increase the overall force level of the Coast Guard.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHANBHAI PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that Pakistani Coast Guards and Indian Coast Guards are in collusion with each other near Kutch

Boarder and they demand a particular amount as hush money every month from the fishermen fishing there? Further, I would like to know whether it is also a fact that the fishermen who refuse to pay this amount are forcibly taken away and lodged in Pakistani jails and there are several fishermen who are now under detention in Pakistan? If so, what action does the hon. Minister propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI K.C. PANT): I have no such information.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTION

[English]

Memorandum from Ambassadors of Arab Countries

1. SHRI SURESH KURUP: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received a memorandum from a delegation of Arab Ambassadors expressing apprehensions about the reported decision of Government to play Davis Cup at Tel Aviv; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government have consistently supported the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to an independent State in their homeland. Government have been deeply concerned by and have condemned the brutal

repression by the Israeli authorities of unarmed Palestinians in the occupied territories. Consistent with India's solidarity with the Palestinian cause India will not play Israel in the Davis Cup play off match scheduled to be held in Tel Aviv in April.

SHRI SURESH KURUP: It is good that after so many days of vacillation and uncertainty, Government has at last come forward with a categorical reply that we are not going to play Davis Cup on the Israeli soil. Actually, Government should not have allowed this rumour to spread, causing apprehension and confusion... (*Interruptions*) among the Palestinian people, and in the entire Third World.

Right from the days of our freedom struggle, we have been consistently supporting the Palestinian cause. Now for the last three months, a heroic struggle is going on, by the Palestinian people in the Israeli-occupied areas. Through this reply, if the Minister is trying to make clear that our stand regarding Israel has not changed, I would like to know from him why they allowed the Israeli team to come over to India during last July and play Davis Cup here on our soil.

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN: May I tell the hon. Member, first of all, that Government did not spread any rumours or cause any rumours to be spread. There are sufficient sources for rumours in this country.

Secondly about playing Israel, may I say that India's record has been principled and consistent. The hon. Member, I think, is aware that there are several non-aligned countries and several Socialist countries where Israeli teams have played in their territories. (*Interruptions*) And, therefore, it should not be mentioned that India has done something wrong. As I said, our basic policy remains; it has been consistent, but today when there is taking place a very massive repression of unarmed people in Palestine,

when there is an uprising, almost a spontaneous uprising and it is being repressed by the Israeli forces ruthlessly, we cannot send a group to play in that country, at this time. This is a major factor.

But what has happened is this. There is our principled position. It has become necessary to demonstrate it conspicuously today, at this time, because of this repression that is going on in Palestine, by not sending a team to play in Tel Aviv.

SHRI SURESH KURUP: I had asked about the attitude of our country, not of any other country. It would have been good if we had followed the Socialist countries in every aspect, not only in this.

(*Interruptions*)

In his answer, the Minister has made it clear that if this massive uprising was not going on in the Israeli-occupied area, we would have considered sending our team to Israel. That is a very painful thing.

A section of the Press has already reported that some talks are going on between Government of India and the Government of Israel regarding normalising the relations between India and Israel, and that Government is contemplating to reopen the Israeli Consulate at Bombay. I would like to know from the Minister whether it is correct or not.

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN: The rumour is absolutely false, that India is negotiating with Israel for establishing relations.

As regard the Consulate....

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: It is already functioning.

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN: As regard the Consulate, there has been one in Bombay for a long time. It was not closed. Only the

Consul-General has been sent away because of a statement that he had made about Government of India's policy. Two Vice-Consuls are functioning there. They can function only in Maharashtra, purely for consular purposes, and nowhere else.

I want to tell the hon. Member that the Arab Ambassadors calling on us and representing, has nothing to do with the decision that we have taken. It is a decision taken. Independently by the Government of India in accordance with its own judgement and sovereign rights.

About our relations with other countries, playing with other countries, what I have pointed out is only an example because we do not have to rely on this example. But it is a fact that the Israeli tennis team has played in Czechoslovakia and the Israeli tennis team has played in the Soviet Union as also Czechoslovakia. These are the facts. But we are not going to play in Israel. (Interruptions) Therefore, it is very important (Interruptions)

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY: That is good.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: May I mention another rumour. I hope it will be only a rumour.

MR. SPEAKER: It is a rumour a day.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Davis Cup fixtures have generally nothing to do with the government; they are fixed on our side by the All India Lawn tennis Association, which is one of the Sports Associations in this country, which are, sometimes we are told that they are autonomous and the government should not interfere, in their activities. The rumour that was afloat a few days ago was that those who are in charge of the All India Lawn Tennis Association, they were very much opposed to getting this fixture cancelled, because, according to rules, and

I think that will now apply also, our All India Lawn Tennis Association will have to pay a fine of 10,000 dollars for not keeping to their engagement in Tel Aviv; also they will not be allowed, India will not be allowed to participate in the Davis Cup tournament for next three years. As far as Olympic games are concerned, in the tennis fixture, we will not be allowed to participate. If these conditions are enforced — 10,000 dollars after all are not a very astronomical sum — and if the ALLTA is going out of pocket, I would request the hon. Minister to reimburse them to the extent of that fine. As far as not being allowed to play in the Davis Cup or in the Olympic games is concerned, I don't think the Heaven will fall, because, in any case, we always lose, we never win.

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN: Last time we had won against Israel. That is a fact. (Interruptions) I would like to say, as a matter of fact, that it is a sacrifice on our part that we have taken this principled decision. When the Arab Ambassadors called on the External Affairs Minister, they had emphasised this; they appreciated that it involved a sacrifice on our part. Therefore, it is for a principle and according to our own judgement of the situation existing in Palestine today that we have taken this decision. As regards cancelling this, it is a fact that the All India Tennis Association had asked for a change of venue and also at least postponement of this event in Israel which was not agreed to by the International Tennis Federation.

SHRI CHANDRA PRATAP NARAIN SINGH: I would like to say that the very meaning of sporting spirit is to play the game and not only to win.

(Interruptions)

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA: Our government has a very consistent and principled policy with respect to our relations

with Israel. But, despite this consistent and clear cut policy, is it not a fact that serious aberrations, advertently or inadvertently, come up in this policy of ours in respect of our attitude towards Israel? For example, the functioning of the Israel Consulate in Bombay is one of those serious aberrations.

In this matter also, is it not a fact that there was initial hesitation on the part of the Government to come to decision not to play the match in Tel Aviv? And it is this hesitation which led to this undue delay and the spread of rumours and everything. When did the Arab Ambassadors here in Delhi meet the Government? When was the decision taken? I am also sorry to say that perhaps it was this initial decision of the Government which led to my question not being admitted initially. Perhaps they took an attitude that it was all arranged by private bodies and that they were not concerned with it. It is only when I followed it up with you vigorously that this question hearing on the same topic has been admitted as an unstarred question for today.

Why all this hesitation? What is the Government doing to see that these hesitations and these aberrations do not come in the way of our policy so that there is no misconception and no rumours are spread to our disadvantage? The aberrations may be inadvertent. That is a different thing. But they also should be avoided. When was the decision taken? When did the Arab Ambassadors meet? Why this long delay despite our consistent policy?

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN: There has been absolutely no aberration as far as India's policy towards the Palestine question is concerned. In fact, this policy is clearer and stronger than the policy followed by some of the very important Arab countries themselves. I am sure, the hon. member is aware of that. In fact, when the Arab Ambassadors came to represent on this, what they

said was that they came not to express their anxiety but to express their confidence that consistent with the policy of the Government of India, our team would not go to Tel Aviv to play. This was the way they put it. They were confident that consistent with our policy, we would not go there.

As far as the decision is concerned, it is immaterial when the decision has been made. What is important is that the decision has been made and there has been absolutely no hesitation in regard to it. It is the privilege of the Government to make the decision public when it seems it is appropriate.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI RAJIV GANDHI): Let it be very clear that we have cancelled this match because of what is happening in the occupied areas today. We have played Israel on other occasions; we will not hesitate to play Israel in the future also. That was not why we have done it. This is because of the atrocities that have been committed.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Scholarship to SC/ST Students

413. DR. V. VENKATESH: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Report of the High Level Official Committee on the question of enhancement of scholarship amount and other matters under the Centrally sponsored scheme or post-matric scholarships of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has been reviewed;

(b) if so, the salient recommendations made in the report; and