

New Year Eve Musing on Kashmir

*106. SHRI CM. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Pakistan Foreign Minister gave a welcome response to the Prime Minister's New Year Eve musing on Kashmir, indicating an expectation for a purposeful dialogue between India and Pakistan;

(b) if so, the details of the Prime Minister's observations referred to as New Year Eve musing on Kashmir and Pakistan's response thereto; and

(c) the details of the ensuing dialogue?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JAS WANT SINGH): (a) to (c) In his article titled "Kumarakom Musings" appearing in January 2001 Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, wrote, "The Kashmir problem is an unfortunate inheritance from the tragic partition of India in 1947. India never accepted the pernicious Two-Nation theory that brought about the partition. However, the mindset that created Pakistan continues to operate in that country. This is why it is continuing with its untenable policy on Kashmir, disregarding the considerations of both good neighbourly relations with India and the well being of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

India is willing and ready to seek a lasting solution to the Kashmir problem. Towards this end, we are prepared to recommence talks with Pakistan at any level, including the highest level, provided Islamabad gives sufficient proof of its preparedness to create a conducive atmosphere for a meaningful dialogue. I am sad to note, however, that the Government of Pakistan is not doing enough to rein-in terrorist organizations based on its soil that are continuing their killing spree, targeting both innocent civilians and our security personnel in Kashmir and other parts of India".

He also wrote, "In our search for a lasting solution to the Kashmir problem, both in its external and internal dimensions, we shall not traverse solely on the beaten track of the past. Rather, we shall be bold and innovative designers of a future architecture of peace and prosperity for the entire South Asian region. In this search, the sole light that will guide us is our commitment to peace, justice and the vital interests of the nation."

There has been no formal statement from Pakistan. However, several comments attributed to Pakistani leaders have appeared in the Pakistani Press on the Prime Minister's article. In one such report, Foreign Minister of Pakistan

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was quoted as having said, "We have taken due note of the statement that has been made specially by India and Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on the New Year eve... we are impressed by what Indian Prime Minister has said." Notwithstanding such comments, there is no evidence of any change in Pakistan's sponsorship of cross border terrorism in the State of Jammu and Kashmir or elsewhere in India. Pakistan continues to give state patronage to obscurantist groups indulging in violence beyond its borders.

India desires the establishment of good neighbourly relations with Pakistan. We have reiterated our commitment to resuming the Composite Dialogue, so as to build trust and confidence, establish a stable structure of cooperation and address outstanding issues. For this, self evidently, an appropriate atmosphere is needed. That is why we expect from Pakistan an abjurement of violence; ceasing promotion, encouragement and abetment of cross border terrorism; and a commitment to the Simla Agreement of 1972 and Lahore Declaration of 1999.

Cases pending in Labour Courts in Tamil Nadu

* 107. SHRIS. AGNIRAJ: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases pending in the Labour Courts in Tamil Nadu as of December, 2000;

(b) the number of cases pending for more than five years in the Courts; and

(c) the steps taken by Government for speedy disposal of these cases.

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATTIYA): (a) As on 31.12.2000. 63 cases are pending in CGIT-cum-Labour Court, Chennai in Tamil and 25328 (13280 under Industrial Disputes Act and 12048 Claim Petitions) are pending in the State Labour Courts of Tamil Nadu.

(b) The CGIT-cum-Labour Court, Chennai has started functioning with effect from 15.03.2000. No case more than five years old is pending in the CGIT-cum,-Labour Court, Chennai.

As on 31.12.2000, total 3693 cases (1460 under I.D Act and 2233 as Claim Petitions) are pending for more than five years in State Labour Courts of Tamil Nadu.

(c) As per information received from the Govt, of Tamil Nadu, the High