

bio-technology, information technology and infrastructure development.

Morocco

The Prime Minister held detailed discussions with King Hasan and Prime Minister Abderrahmane El Yousseoufi of Morocco. Views were exchanged on important global and regional issues, and on ways and means to further expand and diversify bilateral cooperation. The Discussions revealed similarity of approach on most issues. Morocco also expressed understanding of our concerns. During the visit, a Bilateral Investment Protection Agreement, a Tourism Cooperation Agreement, and an Agreement between Press Trust of India (PTI) and Maghreb Arab Presse (MAP) for mutual professional cooperation, were signed.

Visit of Indian delegation to Beijing

999. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-items published in The Hindustan Times dated the 16th February, 1999 captioned "Tyranaround in chinese attitude towards India."

(b) whether any Indian Delegation is likely to visit Beijing to discuss the normalisation process including the modalities of holding the meeting of Joint Working of Indo-China Group (11th Session) towards the end of this month, proposed to be held in China at the invitation of chinese Foreign Minister, and;

(c) if so, what is the reaction of Government to chinese invitation?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: (SHRI JASWANT SINGH):

(a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) Indian and China held Foreign Office consultations in Beijing on 25-26 February 1999. We have proposed that the Joint Working Group on the boundary question be convened at an early date.

Issue of Passports to the Applicants from Punjab

1000. SHRI KARTAR SINGH DUGGAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of passports issued to the applicants from Punjab during 1997-98 including those renewed;

(b) the countries where the Punjabis normally seek to go;

(c) the number of Punjabis who went abroad as tourists and those who emigrated permanently during 1997-98; and

(d) the number of Punjabi tourists who returned to India in 1997-98?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) Details of the number of passports issued and renewed by the applicants from Punjab are as follows:

Year	Passport Issued	Passport Renewed
1997	1,50,659	5,374
1998	1,62,490	4,112

(b) to (d) Punjabis visit almost all the countries. No country-wise record of Punjabis specifically going abroad as tourists, emigrating permanently, and returning to India, is maintained by the Government.

Opinion of G-15 Countries about India's Nuclear Test

1001. SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether G-15 Summit was recently held; if so, the details of outcome thereof;

(b) what has been the opinion of member countries about India's last year's nuclear blast; and

(c) to what extent India has been able to convince the participating countries on the sanctions imposed on India following nuclear tests?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH):

(a) Yes, sir. The Ninth G-15 Summit was held at Montego Bay, Jamaica from February 10-12, 1999. The Summit deliberated extensively on issues of concern to developing countries. These included discussions on the current international economic situation, reaffirmation of the importance of a transparent, fair and equitable rules-based multilateral trading system under the WTO, reform of the international financial architecture, South-South and intra G-15 cooperation, and prospects of undertaking a G-15—G-8 dialogue in these matters. All such priorities were duly reflected in the Joint Communiqué issued at the end of the Ninth Summit. In order to be able to cope with the challenges posed by globalisation and economic liberalisation and the ongoing financial crisis, members agreed to promote convergence of viewpoints on these issues. Participating countries also called for enhanced regional and international cooperation to combat the menace of terrorism.

(b) and (c). No member country of G-15 raised the issue of India's nuclear tests at the Summit.

Economic Sanctions Against India

1002. SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an understanding has reached with USA during his recent talks with Mr. Talbott about likely signing on CTBT by India if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether USA has decided to lift all economic sanctions against India if so, by when; and

(c) the extent of world Bank loan stopped after nuclear test?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH):

(a) The recently held talks with the United States in New Delhi from 29-31 January, 1999 were in continuation of the dialogue initiated in June 1998. As in earlier meetings, the security perspectives of the two sides were further clarified with a view to harmonising the respective views.

Government's position on the CTBT is determined purely by considerations of national interest. The building of a national consensus will continue to guide the Government's approach to the CTBT.

The Indian position regarding CTBT remains as stated by the Prime Minister in UNGA in September, 1998 "India, having harmonised its national imperatives and security obligations and desirous of continuing to cooperate with the international community is now engaged in discussions with key interlocutors on a range of issues, including the CTBT. We are prepared to bring these discussions to a successful conclusion, so that the entry into force of the CTBT is not delayed beyond September 1999. We expect that other countries, as indicated in Article XIV of the CTBT, will adhere to this treaty without conditions."

(b) In partial exercise of waiver authority given by the US Congress, the US Government on November 7, 1998 announced lifting of some restrictive economics measures against India. These relate to programmes of three US institutions namely the EXIM Bank, Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and the Trade Development Authority (TDA). The US Government, also lifted restrictions on activities of Commercial US Banks and International Military Education and Training Programme (IMETR). Bilateral and multilateral programmes of assistance in basic needs areas are also continuing.