

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्रीमती कमला सिन्हा): बाद में। पहले उनको स्टेटमेंट करने दीजिए ... (व्यवधान)

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Madam, the Zero Hour issue cannot be raised at 4.15 P.M. The statement by the External Affairs Minister is a very important issue for us. ... (Interruptions) ...

श्री नरेश यादव: एक मिनट का समय लेना चाहूंगा। ... (व्यवधान)

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्रीमती कमला सिन्हा): आप बैठ जाइए। ये बता देंगे आपको। Mr. Afzal, please sit down. In the 'List of Business' of today, it has been stated that Shri Pranab Mukherjee will make a statement about the visit of Her Excellency, Mrs. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, President of Sri Lanka. So, let him make the statement. Your name is there. Maybe later on we will take up. Please sit down.

श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह (बिहार): महोदया, मैं जरा बीच में रोक रहा हूँ। हिंदी ट्रांसलेशन अभी तक उपलब्ध नहीं है।

श्री ईश दत्त यादव (उत्तर प्रदेश): हमें तो न हिन्दी की कापी मिली है न अंग्रेजी की। कोई कापी नहीं मिली है।

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Visit of H.E. Mrs. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, President of Sri Lanka to India

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): Madam, the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka Mrs. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga paid a State visit to India from March 25—28, 1995. She was accompanied by the Foreign Minister Mr. Lakshman Kadirgamar, the Trade Minister Mr. Kingsley Wickramaratne and senior Advisors and officials. During her visit, the President of Sri Lanka called on the President of India and the Vice-President of India also held discussions with her. The Sri Lankan President had talks with the Prime Minister of March 25 followed by discussions between delegations of the two countries. I had a wide-ranging exchange of views with the Sri Lankan President and members of her delegation. The Finance Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh also called on the visiting dignitary. Discussions between the leaders of the two countries were held in an atmosphere

of cordiality and reflected the mutual desire to further strengthen understanding between our two countries.

In pursuance of the discussions, it has been decided that India would extend tariff concessions to Sri Lanka on certain items of specific export interest to that country. India has also agreed to extend a credit equivalent to US \$30 million to Sri Lanka to facilitate trade and commercial exchanges with India. Hon. Members may be aware that India's exports to Sri Lanka have increased manifold over the last 5 years; both sides agree that there is still vast potential for expansion of trade to mutual benefit, and for increased Indian investments in Sri Lanka.

During my meeting with the Sri Lanka President and members of her delegation, there was a fruitful discussion on our bilateral relations as well as on international issues. It has been agreed that consultations would be held between officials of the two countries as soon as possible to resolve the problems being faced by Indian fishermen. During the discussions, the two sides also stressed the continuing cooperation to ensure the smooth repatriation of Sri Lankan refugees from India.

Sri Lanka and India, both accord high priority to the development of effective regional cooperation. Our two countries are agreed on the need for early operationalisation of SAPTA. During the discussions, it was noted that the Sri Lanka President would be visiting India again soon for the meeting of Heads of State/Government of the SAARC countries.

In her discussions with the Prime Minister, the Sri Lanka President conveyed an assessment of the situation in that country with particular reference to the efforts made by the Govt. of Sri Lanka to restore peace and normalcy and reach a settlement on the ethnic issue. It was reiterated that India has always stood for a peaceful, negotiated settlement to this issue. Restoration of peace and stability in Sri Lanka would have a positive impact in the region.

The Sri Lanka Government has noted the actions already taken by the Government of India over the past few years to comply with the requirements of Indian law relating to the arrest of Prabhakaran. Hon. Members may recall that the designated Court in Madras,

where the trial of the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case is in progress, had issued warrants of arrest and proclamations against V. Prabhakaran under Section 8(3)(A) of TADA. With the approval of the Government of Sri Lanka, these were got published in leading Tamil and English newspapers of Sri Lanka in 1992. According to the proclamations, V. Prabhakaran was directed to appear before the designated Court on or before 28.2.1992. This deadline having passed without the accused appearing before the Court, further legal action into the case has been under progress. On 20 May 1992, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) filed the charge sheet against V. Prabhakaran, prime accused, in the designated Court in Madras. In April 1994, a Red Corner notice requesting the arrest of V. Prabhakaran was circulated through Interpol.

The exchange of views with the Sri Lanka President, who was on her first official bilateral visit abroad has been extremely useful. Hon. Members will recall that immediately after Mrs. Kumaratunga assumed Presidency of Sri Lanka, the Foreign Minister, Mr. Lakshman Kadirgamar had visited India last December for discussions with Indian leaders. These close and regular contacts reflect the priority accorded by both to the maintenance of friendly, bilateral relations and better understanding between our Governments and peoples.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN (Tamil Nadu): Madam, I have two pointed clarifications to seek from the hon. Minister. In paragraph 6 of his statement, the hon. Minister has said that the Sri Lankan Government has noted the actions already taken by the Government of India over the past few years to comply with the requirements of Indian law relating to the arrest of Prabhakaran. The rest of it is about what has happened in India, what has been published in Sri Lanka and about the Interpol I would

like to request the hon. Minister to kindly clarify what exactly was the stand taken by the Sri Lankan President. The Sri Lankan President herself has said that the issue has been discussed at the highest level. We would like to know the stand taken by the Sri Lankan President on the extradition of Prabhakaran specifically. All that the Sri Lankan President has said, "First let us sight him because we do not know where he is. If we find him, then we will see." This is what has appeared in the Press. Madam, with great respect, this does not seem convincing enough to us who have been waiting for so long. This is a matter of national honour. I do not want to waste any rhetoric on this. It is a matter of national honour. It involves a person who was responsible for the assassination of one of the greatest leaders that India has had. I think we should take a very serious note of it, would like to know whether a commitment has been made by the Sri Lankan President. What is the specific position that she has taken about the extradition? I want to know this because she has been evasive in the Press.

The second clarification I would like to seek is this. The hon. Minister has said in paragraph 3 of his statement that it has been agreed that consultations would be held between officials of the two countries as soon as possible to resolve the problems being faced by Indian fishermen. I think, all of us, who come from Tamil Nadu, have failed in our duty to convince the Indian Government, our Government, of the terrible harassment that is being faced by the fishermen from our State. Madam, from 1990 to 1994, there have been 181 attacks on the Indian fishermen who come from Tamil Nadu; 33 fishermen have been killed, 122 fishermen have been injured and 17 boats of these fishermen have been destroyed. This harassment is a day-to-day process that our fishermen are suffering. Every day, the fishermen in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu are being harassed on the one side, by the Sri

Lankan Navy, and on the other side, by the LTTE. They have absolutely no protection at all. Therefore, I want to seek a pointed clarification from the hon. Minister. Time and again this issue has been raised with Sri Lanka. In 1973, according to the Agreement we entered with the Government of Sri Lanka, according to the Treaty, the fishermen from India would be given fishing rights around Kachathivu and certain amount of fishing rights in the historic fishing waters between Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu. Today, the position is, that Agreement is observed more in its breach because the Indian fishermen are just not allowed to go into those waters at all and they are suffering a great loss, a total loss of their livelihood and even losing their lives. Everytime they are being kidnapped and it is after a tremendous effort on the part of the Government that they are being released, if at all, they come back. Therefore, I would like the hon. Minister to clarify if a specific note was made of this during the discussions with the Sri Lankan President. With great respect, I would like to submit that it would not be sufficient to leave it to the officials to sort it out because these are the conferences that keep going on from time to time. It is a very vital issue for those of us from Tamil Nadu and for the whole country because these are the Indian fishermen. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether this has been taken up at the highest possible level because the amount of harassment that is going on is something that has to be taken very seriously. If not, I would like the hon. Minister to kindly commit that he will take it up at the highest level as soon as possible to finally solve the problem and get back the historic fishing rights that the Indian fishermen have always enjoyed between Sri Lanka and India. Thank you, Madam.

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुर (उत्तर प्रदेश): मैडम, मैं मंत्री महोदय का ध्यान आकर्षित करना चाहूंगा कि स्टेटमेंट के आयटम नं० 4 पर उल्लेख है कि—

Our two countries are agreed on the need for early operationalisation of SAPTA.

यह ठीक बात है, लेकिन मंत्रीजी को यह मालूम होगा कि पाकिस्तान ने इसमें शामिल होने से इंकार किया था। कुछ महीने पहले श्रीलंका के कुछ अधिकारी आए थे और उन्होंने यहां अपने ऑफिसर्स से रिव्यू की थी कि "साप्टा" की मीटिंग बुलाई जाय और विदाउट पाकिस्तान बुलाई जाय। तो क्या इस विषय में यह तय किया गया है कि यदि पाकिस्तान इसमें शामिल होना नहीं चाहता तो भी "साप्टा" की यह मीटिंग होगी कि नहीं होगी? दूसरे, श्रीलंका को कुछ तकनीकी परेशानी ट्रेड इम्बेलेन्स की रही है और आपने बताया है कि कुछ समझौते हुए हैं। तो क्या यह समझा जाय कि जो ट्रेड इम्बेलेन्स की शिकायत श्रीलंका को अब तक रही है, वह दूर हो गयी है या नहीं हो गयी है? तीसरा सवाल यह है कि इटैलीजेंस की जानकारी है कि आय०एस०आय० के बहुत बड़े अड्डे श्रीलंका में बन गये हैं। तो इसका कुछ उल्लेख हुआ है कि नहीं हुआ है? इस बारे में उनका आश्वासन मिला है कि नहीं मिला है? इसी प्रकार से इटैलीजेंस डिपार्टमेंट को मालूम है कि ईरान ने भी अपनी इटैलीजेंस के अड्डे बनाए हैं जिसमें कि उनका इरादा है कि साउथ इंडिया में तमिलनाडु के हिस्से में अपनी कार्यवाही की जाय। तो मैं पूछना चाहूंगा कि क्या आय०एस०आय० के अड्डों का श्रीलंका में बनना, ईरान के अड्डों का बनना और आय०एस०आय० का यह इरादा की वह तमिलनाडु के अंदर भी अपनी कार्यवाही प्रारंभ करे— इस ओर ध्यान आकृष्ट किया गया है कि नहीं किया गया है?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI-MATI KAMLA SINHA): Shri Shankar Dayal Singh. (Interruptions)

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY (Pondicherry): Madam, what about me?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI-MATI KAMLA SINHA): Your name is also there.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: But it has to be called according to the serial number. It cannot be like this. The Member who gave his name first, has to be called first. That is the system we follow.

THE

VICE-CHAIRMAN

(SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA): I am calling the name of the Janata Party. That is what I was told to do. Please take your seat. Your name is there. I will allow you. (Interruptions)

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: This is not the practice. I gave this notice well in time. That is the point I am making. It is not according to the party.

श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह (बिहार): उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदया, इस बात की बराबर से आवश्यकता महसूस की जाती रही है कि भारत के संबंध अपने पड़ोसी देशों के साथ अच्छे हों, मधुर हों। मुझे खुशी है कि श्रीलंका में जो नई सरकार गठित हुई तो उनके राष्ट्रपति को हमने यहां आमंत्रित किया और यह उनकी पहली विदेश यात्रा भारत में ही हुई। यह बहुत आवश्यक थी।

महोदया, राष्ट्रपति जी के जो भाषण आते रहे हैं विभिन्न अवसरों पर, मैंने उनको भी गंभीरता से पढ़ा है, देखा है और उसे समझने की कोशिश की है और उसके अंदर जो तत्व है उन्हें खोजने की कोशिश की है। माननीय सदस्या श्रीमती जयंती नटराजन जी ने कचाथिवू की चर्चा की और मछुआरों की समस्याओं को इसके साथ जोड़ा है। वह तो एक तटीय बहुत बड़ी समस्या है ही, मैं इस बात को मानता हूँ। इसी के साथ ही मैं समझता हूँ कि जो उनके साथ एक बड़ी बात होनी चाहिए, वह हमारी सांस्कृतिक रूप से आपसी गठबंधन की बात होनी चाहिए सुरक्षा के बारे में, मैं समझता हूँ, सभी माननीय सदस्य बात करेंगे और प्रश्न भी उठाएंगे, लेकिन मैं इस संबंध में अपने दो तीन प्रश्न रखूंगा। श्रीलंका के लिए तथा जहां जहां बौद्ध धर्म है, उन देशों के लिए यह एक सांस्कृतिक देश रहा है और उनकी कड़ी, कहीं, न कहीं हमारी मित्रता की उस रूप में बंधी हुई है, जिसके कारण हमारा और उन देशों का बहुत पुराने समय से संबंध चला आ रहा है।

महोदया, मैं जानना चाहूंगा कि जब श्रीलंका की राष्ट्रपति श्रीमती चंद्रिका भंडारनायके कुमारतुंगा से बातें हुई तो क्या उन बातों के बीच भारत सरकार की ओर से कोई ऐसी पहल की गई या श्रीलंका की ओर से कोई ऐसी पहल की गई कि जो भारत में बौद्ध स्थल है, जिन्हें बड़ी ब्रह्मा के साथ और सांस्कृतिक रूप से, धार्मिक रूप से वह देश देखते रहे हैं उनके विकास के लिए उन देशों का क्या योगदान है? दूसरा, मैं यह जानना चाहूंगा कि जो यात्री उन देशों से इन स्थलों के लिए आते हैं, चाहे वह बौद्ध स्थल कहीं भी हों, जिसके लिए भारतीय रेलवे

ने भी एक बड़ी स्कीम बनाई है कि उनको एक स्लॉप कैसे जोड़े, क्या इस तरह की कोई बात उनके साथ बातचीत के दौरान उठी है? तीसरी बात मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ, सार्क देशों का एक संबंध मैत्री भाव से बढ़कर भाईचारे का जुड़ा है, इस संबंध में जब श्रीलंका की राष्ट्रपति यहां पर आई तो सेंसिटिव मामले से हमारी दो बड़ी समस्याएं आपस में हैं—एक आतंकवाद की और जैसा आप जानते हैं हमारे यहां कुछ ऐसे पड़ोसी देश हैं जो चाहते हैं इस देश में आतंकवाद को बढ़ावा दें और उसके लिए हमारे पड़ोसी देशों में भी कभी कभी अपने शरणस्थली बनाते हैं तो उस संबंध में क्या भारत सरकार की कोई बातचीत हुई?

मैडम, मैं यही तीन बातें जानना चाहता हूँ—पहली, जो बौद्ध स्थल है उनके संबंध में बातचीत हुई या नहीं, दूसरी, आतंकवाद के बारे में क्या बातें हुई और जो सुरक्षा के मामले हैं उन पर भारत सरकार ने जो प्रतिक्रिया उठाई तो उस पर उनकी प्रतिक्रिया क्या है? धन्यवाद।

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Madam Vice-Chairman, the hon. Minister has mentioned in para 6 of his statement: "The Sri Lankan Government has noted the actions already taken by the Government of India over the past few years to comply with the requirements of Indian law relating to the arrest of Prabhakaran." The response of the Government of Sri Lanka to the request of the Government of India for extradition of V. Prabhakaran in the assassination case of our leader, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, has not been mentioned in the statement. The statement mentions the procedure which has been followed by the Government of India in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case which is pending in the designated Court in Madras. But the Sri Lankan President, while giving a Press interview, was saying, "We have not discussed the extradition of Prabhakaran in that sense. In our discussion I had the occasion to brief the Prime Minister on the present state of affairs in Sri Lanka and we discussed all matters concerning and all problems concerning the apprehension of Prabhakaran". It was only a general discussion. She went on to add, "We

know that the Indian Government had taken all legal action for the apprehension of Prabhakaran." This was informally discussed. From this it is clear that there was only an informal discussion and this item was not formally on the agenda. Therefore, Madam, I would like to know the exact response of the Sri Lankan President to the extradition of Prabhakaran, who is the prime accused in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case. Madam, I know pretty well that it is a difficult task even for the Sri Lankan Government. I would like to know whether they have agreed to take the assistance of the Interpol. Though the Government of India has made a request, the response of the Sri Lankan Government has not been mentioned by the hon. Minister.

Madam, as far as the Government of India is concerned, there is also another area of concern, that is, the illegal entry of LTTE militants into Indian territory, especially into the Southern coasts, Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry and Andhra Pradesh. The Government of Sri Lanka, through their navy, is safeguarding its territories. On the Indian side, our naval force is operating. But there is no co-ordination between the Government of India and the Government of Sri Lanka for the purpose of preventing the LTTE militants from entering into our territory. The distance between the border of Sri Lanka and the border of India is only 20 kilometres to 25 kilometres. Within 45 minutes or even within 30 minutes they can cross over to our territory. This is the geographical position. Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the issue of joint patrolling by India and Sri Lanka in the India territorial waters and in the Sri Lankan territorial waters has been discussed.

Another burning problem, as Shrimati Jayanthi Natrajan has mentioned, is the killing of Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy. They are indiscriminately firing at our fishermen in the Indian territorial waters when our fishermen go

from Rameshwaram and other coastal areas for fishing. The Sri Lankan Navy, under the guise of LTTE, is killing our fishermen. This has become a continuous problem. This creates a law and order problem in the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu. Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Home Minister whether this issue has been discussed at length. I would like to know whether any modalities have been discussed for the purpose of giving protection to Indian fishermen.

Madam, I would like to make a suggestion which the hon. Home Minister may consider. For the purpose of identifying the Indian fishermen, the Sri Lankan Government and the Indian Government can agree to a permit system. By giving permits to our Indian fishermen, who go for fishing in the territorial waters of India, and to the Sri Lankan fishermen, who are coming there, they can be identified from the LTTE militants. I would like to know whether the Government is considering any such proposal.

[The Vice-Chairman (Shri Satish Agarwal) in the Chair]

Another vital issue is the Kachchativu agreement which has been signed and handed over to Sri Lanka. But the rights have been kept with the Government of India for the purpose of enabling our fishermen from the coastal areas to go and dry their nets there. But, unfortunately, to our dismay, we find that whenever our fishermen go there for the purpose of drying their nets they are indiscriminately shot dead by the Sri Lankan Navy and their nets are destroyed. So, I would like to know from the hon. Home Minister—there was also an assurance given by the hon. Prime Minister in this House last year—whether the Government of India had taken up the Kachchativu issue with the Government of Sri Lanka and what solution was arrived at for the purpose of restoring the use of that island by our fishermen.

Sir, my last point is about refugees.

The Sri Lankan refugees were in India. The LTTE militants who escaped from Sri Lanka and came over to India mingled with the people in the refugee camps. These militants are living with these people. So, it has become highly impossible for the police to identify the militants. Therefore, it is very important for the Government of India to send back these refugees to Sri Lanka. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether any time-limit has been fixed for the repatriation of refugees who have been in India, especially in Rameshwaram and other coastal areas, who have been kept there by the Government of India. What is the response of these refugees because earlier they refused to go to Sri Lanka. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether these issues which I have raised were discussed or not. If these issues were discussed, what was the response of the Sri Lankan President? Sir, I would like to say a few words on the peace process that has been initiated. The Government of India has taken a right stand. But the Sri Lankan Government did not act at the appropriate time in tracing the militants. It is creating problems for the southern States. I would like the hon. Minister to respond to these queries. Thank you.

SHRI S. MADHAVAN (Tamil Nadu): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, the rights of the fishermen of Tamil Nadu is the main issue. The hon. Minister has stated that the officials will hold discussions. I must say that officials had gone to Sri Lanka to discuss these matters. But, no solution was found. The hon. Prime Minister assured the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu that these problems will be solved. In spite of all these assurances made, a number of times, on the floor of the House, the Sri Lankan Navy is continuing to shoot and kill the innocent Tamil Nadu fishermen. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether, according to the 1974 Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement, the traditional rights of fishing, pilgrimage and navigation, which both the countries enjoyed in the past in

each other's waters irrespective of the division of maritime boundary line, have been fully safeguarded for the future. The Congress (I) Government had made a statement on the floor of this House stating that even around Kachchativu—Kachchativu is very close to Sri Lanka—Tamil Nadu fishermen have the right to go and fish. This assurance was given by the then Congress Government on the floor of this House. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he has taken up this point with the Sri Lankan President. Till this issue is solved, I would like to know whether any mechanism can be worked out between the Sri Lankan Navy and the Indian coastal guards to safeguard the lives of the fishermen of Tamil Nadu. Sir, because of the problem of ethnic conflicts in Sri Lanka Tamil Nadu is the worst affected State. The Tamil Nadu Government has spent enormous money because of this issue, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he has discussed with the Sri Lankan President about the immediate repatriation of the Sri Lankan Tamils who have been detained in special camps in Tamil Nadu apart from the refugee problem. I understand that the hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has already taken up this issue with the hon. Prime Minister and requested him to give permission to send back all the Sri Lankan Tamils detained in special camps immediately to Sri Lanka. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether this matter was discussed or not. Sir, Tamil Nadu is the worst-affected State. When the 1974 Agreement was entered into Mrs. Indira Gandhi, our late revered leader was there. As Prime Minister she invited the representatives of the Tamil Nadu Government. I myself participated in it. We had a discussion. I myself produced evidence to prove that the Tamil Nadu Government had exercised the rights of fishing around Kachchativu. I produced the relevant documents to prove it right.

Did the Central Government invite

representatives of the Tamil Nadu Government before discussing these issues? If not, why Did the Central Government have the courtesy to ask for the views of the Tamil Nadu Government before discussing these issues? There is another matter. There are a lot of reports that the ISI agents are infiltrating the Southern States through Sri Lanka and are creating trouble. This news item has been published many times. Was this issue discussed with the Sri Lankan President? I would like to know about it.

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA (West Bengal): Sir, I would like to seek clarifications on only one or two specific questions. Let me at the very outset express our happiness that this particular visit took place and we hope that it will open a new chapter in the relationship between India and Sri Lanka. Now, as far as the ethnic issue is concerned, the statement says that attempt should be made to reach a settlement on the issue. We will be very happy if such a settlement takes place. I would like to raise two minor points. One is that such settlement should recognise the linguistic and cultural identity of the Tamil population there and their autonomy in the areas where they inhabit should also be protected within the confines of the Sri Lankan Constitution. I hope this demand of the Tamils would be respected. Along with this, in the discussions which take place between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Tamil groups, the non-LTTE groups should not be left out of the discussions. There is a tendency to concentrate on the LTTE. This is unfortunate. The other groups also play a very very important role. One of the groups was actually in the Government in one State for some time. So, this is also something which I would like to urge upon the Foreign Minister to take up with the Sri Lankan Government. The second issue relates to the Indian Ocean. Sri Lanka is very much interested in the Indian Ocean. We are also interested in the Indian Ocean. There was some reference made about

the fishing rights and all that. That is okay. But there are other questions too. For instance, the question of defence of the country. There are military bases in the Indian Ocean. Diego Garcia is still America's military base. At the height of the civil war in Sri Lanka, the United States had its base at the Trincomalee port. Now, have you raised the question of the involvement of Israeli Mossads in the training of the Sri Lankan army? That issue should also be taken up. We should try to work out some arrangement with them so that the Indian Ocean is declared as an Ocean free from nuclear weapons. Any vessel carrying nuclear weapons should not be permitted to sail on the Indian Ocean. Some such arrangement should be made between India and Sri Lanka. The other countries which are located in this area should also be taken into confidence so that we can actually put forward a common demand. This was a demand which had been voiced sometime in the eighties. Somehow, in the recent years, it looks as if the Foreign Affairs Ministry has forgotten about it. This should be taken up not only with the Sri Lankan Government, but also while holding discussions with the dignitaries from the United States. I am not sure whether our Foreign Affairs Minister, while hosting a dinner to Mrs. Clinton, discussed this issue. The third issue that I would like to raise is with regard to trade. I see a certain shift in the trade policy which is a welcome change. There was a time in the mid-eighties when India was fighting with all the neighbours-Sri Lanka, Burma, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal. India was not willing to make a small concession even to a country like Nepal. This created a lot of difficulties for us. This certainly did not help us in our discussions with the world community or even in our discussions with the small neighbouring countries. Obviously, the small neighbours have a fear of the big neighbour. We must be more accommodating and more willing to give concessions to our small neighbours.

There is nothing which can actually go against India as a country.

We will actually benefit by co-operation with the smaller countries. So, the proposals of giving some concessions and having trade relations with Sri Lanka are welcome changes in our Policy. But I would contradict Mr. Mathur on what he has suggested about SAPTA. You cannot have a meaningful SAPTA by leaving out Pakistan. We may have differences with them. But that is a different thing. If you look at the countries in the European Union, they have a lot of difficulties among them on various issues. But, somehow, they have managed to come together on economic issue. So, we should try to involve all the countries including Pakistan on any economic arrangement that is being made. Keeping in mind the fact that we were all in one country once upon a time, we have to make the fullest possible exploitation of the resources and the manpower that we have to the benefit all the countries of this region.

Thank you, Sir.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI (Tamil Nadu): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, before seeking my clarifications, I would like to quote what has been stated in para 3 of the statement...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SATISH AGARWAL): Everybody has read it. We are running short of time.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBHI: I would read one sentence only. It reads: "It was agreed that consultations will be held between the officials of the two countries as soon as possible to resolve the problems being faced by the Indian fishermen." I want to seek clarifications on this point alone. As far as the fishermen's problems are concerned...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SATISH AGARWAL): On this very point, Smt. Jayanthi Natarajan has already sought clarifications. Why do you have to repeat it?

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI:

Sir, I am on a different point. As far as the Indian fishermen are concerned, they have been subjected to continuous atrocities in the last five years. So many fishermen have been killed and assaulted upon. Some of them were even arrested in the international waters on the Indian borders. Their belongings were destroyed. Sometimes they were thrown into the sea and were shot dead. Later, their catches of prawns, etc., were taken away by the Sri Lankan Navy. Talks were held at the Foreign Secretaries-level in October, 1993 and March, 1994, and another set of talks at the Foreign Ministers'-level was held in April, 1994, and December, 1994. But no concrete decision on this issue was arrived at. Now, after the arrival of the President of Sri Lanka, the Government is saying that they want to have another round of talks with them. After having had the talks at the Foreign Secretaries-level and at the Foreign Ministers'-level, they say that as soon as possible they would like to have another round of talks. I don't understand why the Government failed to get any assurance from the President of Sri Lanka that the Government of Sri Lanka would see to it that such type of atrocities were not continued to be committed against our fishermen. Until 1976, our fishermen were enjoying four basic rights, namely, sailing, worshipping, fishing, and drying of nets. But the DMK Government was dismissed in 1976 and President's Rule was imposed. During that time, a letter was sent to the Government of Sri Lanka by the Indian Government in which all the rights which were enjoyed by us for centuries were given up. The Government should come forward and say why they had to give up those right and whether they would withdraw the letter and take back our rights. In fact, on 12th May, 1994, we organised a demonstration in Madras expressing our fears and anxieties on this issue. Therefore, I would like to know why the Government has failed to get an assurance from the President of Sri Lanka on this very important issue. This

is the first clarification which I would like to seek. Secondly, I would like to know whether the Government will come forward to withdraw the letter that they sent in 1976, during the President's Rule. If that letter is withdrawn, then, automatically, our fishermen will get back their rights. Sir, unless these two things are done, nothing can save the fishermen of Tamil Nadu. So, I want a categorical statement from the Minister on these two issues. The people of Tamil Nadu are so much agitated. Every month, almost five to ten fishermen are killed and more than ten fishermen are exposed to injuries and their catches are taken away. That is why the Government of India should take immediate action on this. The Government should not say that this aspect is also one among the bilateral issues.

It is a life and death question of the Tamilians and the Indians. Therefore, the Government should take special interest in the matter and give a categorical answer to the questions raised. I want an assurance from the Government that this type of atrocities would not be allowed to happen and that it would protect the Indian fishermen.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SATISH AGARWAL): Thank you, Mr. Virumbi. I have received certain requests from the hon. Members who wish to seek clarifications on the statement. I am inclined to permit them. But before I do that, I have to inform the House that we have received certain messages from the Lok Sabha. Now the Secretary-General.

MESSAGES FROM THE LOK SABHA

(I) The Bihar Appropriation (Vote on Account) Bill, 1995

(II) The Bihar Appropriation Bill, 1995.

SECRETARY-GENERAL: Sir, I

have to report to the House the following messages received from the Lok Sabha, signed by the Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha:—

(I)

"In accordance with the provisions of rule 96 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, I am directed to enclose the Bihar Appropriation (Vote on Account) Bill, 1995, as passed by Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 30th March, 1995

2. The Speaker has certified that this Bill is a Money Bill."

(II)

"In accordance with the provisions of rule 96 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, I am directed to enclose the Bihar Appropriation Bill, 1995, as passed by Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 30th March, 1995.

2. The Speaker has certified that this Bill is a Money Bill."

Sir, I lay a copy of each of the Bills on the Table.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SATISH AGARWAL): Hon. Members, we have created history by extending the Zero Hour for more than three hours. Let us now create history by passing the four or five Bills before us within 10 minutes.

THE SALARY, ALLOWANCES AND PENSION OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1995

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MATANG SINH): Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Salary, Allowances and Pension of Members of Parliament (Amendment) Bill, 1995, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The question was put and the motion was adopted.