

Wasteful Expenditure by Embassy at Brussels

2664. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the staff strength of the erstwhile India Trade Centre (ITC) at Brussels was reduced in October, 1995 and merged with the Commerce Wing of the Embassy;

(b) whether the ITC occupies a rented building but the Embassy at Brussels did not terminate the lease of the building, which was not required and thereby incurred a wasteful expenditure of Rs. 88.22 lakh on rent; and

(c) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) :

(a) Yes, Sir. Staff Strength of the erstwhile India Trade Centre (ITC) was reduced from 11 to 9 in October, 1995. However, actual merger took place in May, 1996.

(b) and (c) ITC was accommodated in a rented building till December, 2000 as the main chancery building did not have enough space to accommodate the ITC personnel. Since July 2001, after additional space was constructed in the Chancery premises, ITC personnel now function from the Chancery.

Extradition Treaties

2665. SHRIMATIS G. INDIRA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to sign extradition treaties with more countries of the world ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) :

(a) and (b) Yes, Sir. India has already signed extradition treaties with 16 countries (Belgium, Bhutan, Canada, Germany, Hong Kong, Mongolia, Nepal, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America and Uzbekistan). The texts of the extradition treaties with Philippines, Poland, Spain and Malaysia have been initialled at the official level, but the treaties can be signed only after the Contracting States in each case complete the requisite process of obtaining internal approvals.

With 24 other countries, proposals for signing the Extradition Treaties are at various stages of consideration/negotiation.

(c) Does not arise.

Resumption of dialogue with Pakistan

2666. DR. KARAN SINGH :

SHRI C. M. IBRAHIM :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a joint press conference addressed by Pak-President and the visiting German Chancellor in Islamabad on October 28, 2001, in which they made a direct appeal to India for resumption of dialogue with Pakistan on the format agreed upon at Agra Summit;

(b) if so, Government's response there to; and

(c) whether the Agra-talks were resumed in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in early November, 2001.

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) :

(a) and (b) Government have seen reports of the Joint Press Conference addressed by President Musharraf and German Chancellor Schroeder in Islamabad on 28-11-2001.

The State of Jammu & Kashmir is an integral part of India. A part of the territory of the State is under the forcible and illegal occupation of Pakistan. Under the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration, India and Pakistan are committed to resolving all issues peacefully through direct bilateral approaches. There is no question of the involvement of any third party whatsoever. Government have on numerous occasions reiterated their commitment to resume the Composite Dialogue and pick up the threads of Lahore. This desire was clearly manifested in Prime Minister's invitation to President Musharraf for summit level talks, which were held at Agra in July this year. Pakistan must end its sponsorship of cross-border terrorism in Jammu & Kashmir and other parts of India so that a conducive environment is created for a productive dialogue.

(c) No meeting was held between Prime Minister and the Pakistan President on the sidelines of the UNGA meeting at New York this November.