

of sea water into potable water based on Low Temperature Thermal Desalination (LTTD) technology. The LTTD is a process under which the warm surface sea water is flash evaporated at low pressure and the vapour is condensed with cold deep sea water. This technology is found suitable for the Lakshadweep Islands.

(b) No, Sir. However, the cost per liter of desalination would depend on the technology used and cost of electricity which varies from place to place. According to the cost estimates made by an independent agency for LTTD technology, the operational costs per litre of desalinated potable water is about 61 paise for island based plants.

(c) Does not arise.

### **Attack on people from foreign countries**

2796. SHRI DEVENDER GOUD T.: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of incidents of attacks on Africans and people from the other countries in the last three years, year-wise and country-wise;

(b) what are the reasons that the number of incidents of attacks on Africans are increasing over the years, particularly in major cities of the country; and

(c) the preventive and other steps the Ministry is taking to prevent recurring of such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI M. J. AKBAR): (a) and (b) The incidents of attacks on foreign nationals are criminal acts perpetrated by anti-social and criminal elements and should not be construed as racist attacks. Whenever attacks on foreign nationals, including Africans, are brought to the notice of the Ministry of External Affairs, we take up the matter with the State Governments concerned and request an investigation into the incident. The State Governments are sensitised of the need to ensure the safety of foreigners and take action against the perpetrators, given that law and order is a State subject and that such incidents generate negative publicity that adversely affects India's image.

(c) In order to ensure that these incidents of violence against foreign nationals, including Africans, do not recur, several remedial steps were taken. The External Affairs Minister wrote to the Chief Ministers of States having large numbers of Africans and requested them to take steps to ensure their safety and security. These measures include increased police patrolling, community sensitisation and

interactions. A monitoring mechanism has been set up under the States Division in the Ministry of External Affairs to coordinate with the State Governments concerned regarding follow up of the cases reported. The External Affairs Minister also met the African diplomatic and student community and assured them of India's commitment to the safety and security of Africans in India, so that India will continue to remain a country where they feel welcome. The sensitization efforts undertaken by Government and the monitoring mechanisms established have resulted in better appreciation of each other's concerns in the localities where Africans reside in large numbers.

#### **Opening of road and rail links by China in Nepal**

†2797. SHRI PARVEZ HASHMI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether opening of road and rail link by China in Nepal is a matter of concern for India;

(b) whether it is a fact that with increasing investment by China in Nepal, today India's internal cordial relations with Nepal is faltering and an undue malice is building up in Nepal against our country; and

(c) whether Government of India is making efforts for restoring its cordial relations with its friend Nepal the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI M. J. AKBAR): (a) Government has seen media reports that China plans to extend its rail link to Nepal. Financial and technical details of the proposal have not come to the attention of the Government.

(b) and (c) India is an active development partner of its neighbours and is involved in various projects in these countries. India's relations with other countries stand on their own footing and are independent of the relations of those countries with third countries. Our relations with Nepal have their own natural logic and stand firmly on their own. India's age-old ties with Nepal are unique and special, characterized by an open border based on shared history, geography, culture, close people-to-people ties, mutual security and close economic linkages.

India is committed to further strengthen and expand India-Nepal Cooperation through regular bilateral exchanges and development assistance. India continues to extend all assistance in accordance with the aspirations of the people of Nepal, for peace, stability and socio-economic development of the country.

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.