

**Deterioration of Indo-Nepal relations**

2819. SHRI D. P. TRIPATHI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the reasons for the deterioration of Indo-Nepal relations in the recent past; and
- (b) the measures taken by Government to rectify the unfortunate fall-out in Indo-Nepal relations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI M. J. AKBAR): (a) and (b) There is no deterioration of India's ties with Nepal. 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. Two-thirds of Nepal's global trade is with India and over 90% of Nepal's third country import-export transit through India. India is committed to further strengthen and expand India-Nepal cooperation through regular bilateral exchanges and development assistance. Our bilateral mechanisms covering the areas of defence and security, trade, power, water resources and border management are meeting regularly besides the India-Nepal Joint Commission which comprehensively reviews the entire gamut of bilateral relations. 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.

**Operation Sankat Mochan to rescue Indians in Sudan**

2820. SHRIMATI WANSUK SYIEM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India recently carried out successfully its rescue operation code named operation Sankat Mochan to evacuate a large number of Indians stranded at Jubah in South Sudan where a civil war had erupted earlier killing more than 300 persons from various ethnic factions; and
- (b) whether considering the urgency and complexity of the situation, India chose to depute its Minister of State for External Affairs to personally supervise the rescue operations, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI M. J. AKBAR): (a) Hostilities broke out between two warring factions in South Sudan's capital Juba on 07 July 2016, resulting in fatalities and disruption of normal services of public utilities and movement. The Government of India, in order to alleviate the difficulties faced by our nationals in South Sudan, launched Operation Sankat Mochan under which 153 Indians and 2 citizens of Nepal were evacuated.