

(c) It has been Government's position that India and Pakistan must resolve all outstanding issues through direct bilateral dialogue and that there is no role for any third party in the process. Government has also noted that the United States acknowledges Pakistan's links with, and its Government's responsibility to take steps to end, cross-border terrorism in India.

(d) Government will continue to pursue a foreign policy based on India's national interests.

American Ambassador's views on Investment

†960. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, "Bharat mein videshi nivesh ke liye mahol anukool nahin", published in the Punjab Kesari, Delhi edition, dated the 30th October, 2002;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that these views have been expressed by America's ambassador to India;

(c) if so, whether Government have got this confirmed from the American Embassy; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes.

(b) to (d) The report is based on a speech delivered by the U.S. Ambassador at a function organised by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry on 29 October 2002 in Delhi. The U.S. Ambassador had spoken about the new relationship between India and the United States, the high priority that the United States attaches to this relationship and about the U.S. perception of the need for further economic reforms in

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

India to accelerate the growing India-U.S. economic relations and realise the full potential of bilateral economic ties.

Rail links between India and Nepal

†961. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Nepal have agreed to establish rail links;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the rail links are likely to be established between the two countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (c) With a view to facilitating movement of cargo between Calcutta/Haldia to Birgunj in Nepal via Raxaul in Bihar, a rail link has been established with Indian assistance between Raxaul and Birgunj. For operationalising this link, a Railway Protocol and Customs Agreement would have to be concluded between the two sides. Two rounds of discussions have taken place in May 2002 in Kathmandu and in September 2002 in Delhi. Some progress has been made and the two sides have agreed to continue their discussions with a view to finalizing the Agreement.

Non-Cooperation by Indian Mission in Deportation of Abu Salem

962. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Mission in Lisbon did not extend co-operation to the visiting CBI team for deportation of underworld don help up in Portugal prison;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.