

Indo-Iran relations

1619. PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indo-Iran relations have further improved after the President Khatami's visit to the country; and

(b) if so, whether Government would take the house into confidence on whether or not Government were considering to offer the desired servicing of Iranian sub-marines in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) Yes. The recent visit of President of Iran H.E. Seyyed Mohammad Khatami which took place from 24 to 28 January 2003 has further consolidated India-Iran relations. During the visit, wide ranging discussions on bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest were held. The New Delhi Declaration, signed by the Prime Minister and the Iranian President, puts forth the vision of strategic partnership between India and Iran for a more stable, secure and prosperous region and for enhanced regional and global cooperation. It touches all aspects of cooperation — bilateral economic cooperation, cooperation in the field of hydrocarbons, science and technology, information technology, education and training, reconstruction of Afghanistan, international terrorism, and other global issues.

In addition to the New Delhi Declaration, a Memorandum of Understanding on the Road Map to Strategic Cooperation was also signed which sets a five-year target oriented framework for milestones towards the strategic partnership. Six other documents: Agreement on Science and Technology cooperation; MoUs on cooperation in hydrocarbons sector, Vocational Training and Urban Water Management; Cultural Exchange Programme (2003-2005); and Framework Agreement on operationalisation of USD 200 million Indian line of credit to be implemented by Exim Bank through a group of Iranian Banks, were also signed.

(b) No such proposal is under consideration.

Curbs on Pakistan nationals' travel in India

1620. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOOT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that his Ministry has objected to the Ministry of Home Affairs' plan to curb Pakistan nationals' travel in India;