

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1384
ANSWERED ON:30.07.2003
VISIT OF FOREIGN DIGNITARIES
CHANDRA NATH SINGH;NVEDITA MANE;SADASHIVRAO DADOBA MANDLIK

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the foreign dignitaries who visited India in the last three months and till date;
- (b) the issues on which deliberations were held with each of the dignitaries:
- (c) whether any bilateral agreements were signed with them: and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH)

(a) to (d) The information, country-wise is given below:

BANGLADESH:

Mr. Saifur Rahman, Finance Minister of Bangladesh paid an official visit to India from May 19-22, 2003. Discussions focussed on increasing trade and investment between the two countries. In addition, both sides discussed the need for improving infrastructure for smooth trade and reduction in smuggling, delay and goods getting spoilt. No bilateral agreement was signed during the visit.

MYANMAR:

Mr. U Win Aung, Foreign Minister of Myanmar visited India as a Special Envoy of Chairman, SPDC and Prime Minister of Myanmar Senior General Than Shwe on July 10, 2003. He delivered a letter from Chairman, SPDC to Prime Minister and explained the circumstances in which Aung San Suu Kyi was taken into preventive custody. No bilateral agreement was signed during the visit.

SRI LANKA:

Prof.G.L Peiris, Minister for Enterprise Development, Industrial Policy & Investment Promotion and Constitutional Affairs visited New Delhi on June 13, 2003. Prof. G.L. Peiris informed GOI on the latest developments in the peace process including suspension of talks between the Sri Lankan Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Sri Lankan Government's decision to put forth new proposals for restarting the peace process. No bilateral agreement was signed during the visit.

VIETNAM:

Mr. Nong Duc Manh, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam paid a State Visit to India from 29th April to 2nd May 2003. Deliberations were held on further strengthening and expanding bilateral relations. There was also an exchange of views on international and regional issues.

During the visit of the Mr. Nong Duc Manh, General Secretary of Communist Party of Vietnam, a Joint Declaration on the Framework of Comprehensive Cooperation was signed by the two countries. The Joint Declaration envisages a comprehensive cooperation for the next 15 years with major thrusts on: conducting regular high level meetings; cooperating in the UN and other international fora; assisting each other in protecting their respective interests in the international arena; endeavouring to maintain and improve the efficiency of the Joint Commission; raising their trade and economic cooperation; promoting R&D cooperation in various fields of S&T; taking gradual steps to expand cooperation in security and defence, anti-piracy measures, and preventing terrorist acts targeted at each other; further expanding and diversifying cooperation in human resource development; and increasing exchange of and cooperation in culture and information, archaeology, tourism, etc.

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC:

Mr. Somsavat Lengsavad, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic paid an official visit to India from 4th to 7th May 2003. Deliberations covered bilateral relations, preparations for the visit of the Lao Prime Minister in June 2003, and exchange of views on international and regional issues, especially with regard to ASEAN-India cooperation during the period of 3 years starting July 2003 in which Laos would be the country coordinator for India.

Mr. Bounnhang Vorachit, Prime Minister of Lao People's Democratic Republic paid a State Visit to India from 15th to 22nd June 2003. Deliberations covered the need to enhance cooperation in the field of trade and investment, IT, culture and tourism. There was also an exchange of views on international and regional issues, and both sides agreed to strengthen their cooperation in the fight against terrorism and its support mechanisms. In the context of Lao PDR's impending assumption of responsibilities as Country Coordinator for India in ASEAN from July 2003, both sides agreed to take concrete initiatives to strengthen the linkages between India and ASEAN including under the Initiative for ASEAN Integration designed to benefit the four new ASEAN member countries including the Lao PDR. The two countries also agreed to support and participate in various projects within the framework of the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation.

During the visit of Mr. Bounnhang Vorachit, Prime Minister of Lao PDR, an Agreement on Cooperation in Science & Technology was signed. The Agreement aims to promote long term cooperation in S&T between the two countries. It envisages promotion and facilitation of cooperation between the respective S&T organisations, enterprises and institutions. It involves visits and exchanges of Experts, organisation of seminars and workshops in various areas of S&T, training of science and technology personnel, implementation of joint projects on science and technology, exchange of scientific and technological information and documents, etc.

Mr. Samane Vignaketh, President of the National Assembly of Lao People's Democratic Republic, lead a Parliamentary delegation to India from 21st to 25th July 2003. He called on President, Vice-President, Speaker of Lok Sabha, received External Affairs Minister and held a meeting with the Standing Committee on External Affairs.

IRAN:

Mr. Mohsen Aminzadeh, Deputy Foreign Minister visited India from 21-22 July 2003. The Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister visited for the Third Round of India-Iran Strategic Dialogue held at the level of Foreign Secretary/Deputy Foreign Minister. Issues relating to bilateral relations as well as regional issues including situation in Iraq and Afghanistan were discussed between the two sides. No agreement was signed.

AFGHANISTAN

The following foreign dignitaries from Afghanistan visited India in the last three months till date:

(i) Transport Minister Seyed Ali Javid visited India from 20-30 April 2003. During his visit, he also called on External Affairs Minister. Issues related to bilateral relations including India's reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan, especially in the field of public transport were discussed.

(ii) Minister of Civil Aviation Mirwais Sadiq visited India from 7-10 May 2003 on the invitation of Union Minister for Civil Aviation. Maintenance support of three airbus aircrafts gifted by India to Afghanistan and training for Ariana Airlines personnel in India were discussed during the visit.

(iii) Minister-Advisor on Tribal Affairs and President, Afghan Cricketing Federation, Shehzada Masood, visited India and met Shri Rajeev Shukla, Member of Parliament and Member, Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on 17 June 2003. Discussions were held on cooperation with BCCI in promoting cricket in Afghanistan. No agreement was signed.

BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA:

Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina Dr. Mladen Ivanic visited India from 6-8 May 2003. During his visit, the Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina called on the President and the Prime Minister of India and had meetings with the Minister of Commerce & Industry and the Minister of Tourism & Culture, besides holding detailed discussions with the Minister of External Affairs. Issues of bilateral cooperation in various fields, including trade and investment, were discussed during the visit. The two sides agreed to develop multi-faceted relationship between them.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION:

Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation Mr. Igor Ivanov visited India from 15-17 June 2003. During his visit, the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation called on the President and the Prime Minister and had meetings with the Minister of External Affairs and the Raksha Mantri. Issues of bilateral, regional and international interest were discussed in these meetings. Both sides expressed satisfaction with the progress in bilateral relations which are characterised by strategic partnership between them. No agreement was signed during the visit.

U.S.A.:

The U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Richard D. Armitage, visited India on 9-10 May, 2003. The visit provided opportunity to discuss ways to accelerate bilateral cooperation; exchange views on regional and international issues of mutual concern, including the U.S. led war in Iraq; and, the Prime Minister's peace initiative with Pakistan as well as the latest trends in cross-border terrorism. No agreement was signed.

DJIBOUTI:

Djiboutian President Mr. Ismail Omar Guelleh along with four Cabinet Ministers (Mr. Abdi Ibrahim Obsieh, Minister of National Education, Mr. Elmi Obsieh Wais, Minister of Equipment and Transportation, Mr. Ali Abdi Farah, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ougoureh Kifleh Ahmed, Minister of Defence) and a large business delegation visited India from 18 to 23 May, 2003. He called on the President, and met the Prime Minister, Defence Minister, HRD Minister and Surface Transport Minister. Issues of bilateral, regional

and international importance were discussed during the meetings.

Three Agreements/Exchange Programme were signed during the visit. These are:-

(i) Bilateral Investment Protection and Promotion Agreement

(ii) Air Service Agreement

(III) Cultural Exchange Programme

SAUDI ARABIA:

H.E. Dr. Saleh E. Al-Hussaini, Deputy Minister of Industrial Affairs, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia visited India from April 25-30, 2003. He was accompanied by a 14-member official and 14-member business delegation. He met Secretary(ANA), MEA and Secretary(SS &ARI) and useful discussions were held for increasing bilateral cooperation particularly in Banking sector. The Saudi delegation also visited Mumbai and Bangalore and new areas of cooperation were identified. The Saudi Minister showed great interest in Indian IT companies guiding Saudi's in the area of Information Technology.

UAE

A delegation from the UAE led by H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed al Nahyan, Chief of Staff of UAE Armed Forces accompanied by H.H. Sheikh Abdulla, Minister of Information & Culture and HH Sheikh Hamad, Head of the Department of Economy, Abu Dhabi along with accompanying officials visited India from June 30-July 1, 2003. Sheikh Mohammed called on President, PM, DPM, EAM and RM and delegation level talks were held between the two countries. The talks represented the first meeting of a strategic dialogue between the two countries covering issues of bilateral, regional and international interests including economic cooperation, cooperation in areas of defence and security. An agreement on defence cooperation was signed during the visit. It was also agreed that the strategic dialogue would be institutionalised to take place annually at regular intervals.

BAHRAIN:

Mr. Abdul Nabi Abdullah Al-Sho'ala (without portfolio) in the office of the Prime Minister of Bahrain visited New Delhi to participate in the conference on "Dialogue amongst Civilisations" which was held from July 9-10, 2003 in New Delhi. During his visit he also called on our Deputy Prime Minister, and MOS(VK), Ministry of External Affairs. The Bahraini Minister handed over a letter from the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain addressed to our Prime Minister. He also gave a copy of letter addressed to EAM UNESCO at the next session of the Board (October-November 2003)

CHILE:

Her Excellency Mrs. Maria Soledad Alvear, Minister of External Relations of Republic of Chile visited India from April 24-27, 2003. The deliberations covered wide range of issues pertaining to bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest including the situation in Iraq, democratization and reforms of the UN, role of NAM in addressing global issues such as, poverty alleviation, financing for development, food security, issues of international peace and security, terrorism and disarmament as well as environmental protection. The discussions also focused on further strengthening of bilateral relations in the political, trade, economic, scientific and technological spheres with a view to harnessing the considerable untapped potential for mutually beneficial cooperation between Chile and India in these fields.

The following agreements were signed during the visit:

(i) Agreement on Animal Health;

(ii) Agreement on Visa Exemption for holders of diplomatic and official passports;

(iii) Cultural Exchange Programme for the years 2003-05.

UZBEKISTAN:

Col. Rustam S. Niyazov, Deputy Defence Minister of Uzbekistan visited India from 26th April to 2nd May, 2003. Bilateral defence related issues were discussed. A Protocol on Development of Military Cooperation between Ministry of Defence of Republic of Uzbekistan and Ministry of Defence, Republic of India for the year 2003 was signed.

ANGOLA:

Angolan Planning Minister visited India from April 17-19, 2003 to formalize India-SADC Forum. No agreement was signed.

BOTSWANA:

Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited India from 7-11 April, 2003. He had 2nd Round of Foreign Office consultations. No agreement was signed.

MOZAMBIQUE:

Minister of Labour visited India from 18-23 April, 2003. He has discussed areas of cooperation between our Ministry of Labour and the Mozambican Ministry of Labour, and for enhancing bilateral cooperation between the two countries. No agreement was signed.

President of Mozambique visited India from 11-15 May, 2003. He has discussed issues relating to enhance bilateral relations between the two countries. The following agreements were signed :

- (i) Memorandum of Understanding in the field of Agriculture;
- (ii) Bilateral Inter-Governmental Science & Technology Agreement

ZAMBIA:

President of Zambia visited India from 20-25 April, 2003. He has discussed issues to enhance bilateral relations between the two countries. The following agreements were signed :

- (i) Agreement on cooperation in Trade;
- (ii) Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Agriculture;

ERITREA:

Eitream Minister of Foreign Affairs accompanied by a eight member delegation (with Minister of Education and Minister of Agriculture) visited India from 7-12, 2003. He has discussed areas of bilateral cooperation between the two countries. A General Agreement on Bilateral Cooperation in political, economic, technical, cultural and other fields and also for setting up of a Joint Commission was signed.

SENEGAL:

Mr. Abdou Fall, Senegalese Minister for Culture and Communications visited India from 9-12 July, 2003. He has participated in the conference on 'Dialogue among Civilizations-Quest for new Perspectives' held in New Delhi. No agreement was signed.