

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2953
ANSWERED ON:13.08.2003
INDO-BANGLADESH TALKS
RAMDAS RUPALA GAVIT

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether secretary level talks were held between Bangladesh and India recently;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the outcome thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA)

(a) Foreign Secretary level talks between India and Bangladesh were held on 29th April, 2003 in Dhaka. More recently, during the meeting of the Standing Committee of officials prior to the 6th Joint Economic Commission meeting held in Dhaka from 14-16th July, Foreign Secretary had discussions with the Secretary, Economic Resources Division, of the Government of Bangladesh.

(b) & (c) During the talks in April, the two sides extensively discussed all issues of common interest covering the entire gamut of bilateral relations and important regional issues. It was agreed that the Joint Boundary Working Groups would be revived and would meet soon to work towards early resolution of border demarcation and related issues. It was also agreed to strengthen and fully implement the existing agreed procedures to stop cross border illegal movement of people. The Bangladesh side also reaffirmed its commitment not to allow its territory to be used for any activities inimical to the interests of India. A number of economic issues were also discussed including rail and road connectivity and a bilateral Free Trade Agreement. Indian assistance for projects in the Information Technology sector and for joint storm surge disaster reduction were also offered.

2. During the Standing Committee meeting all issues of economic and commercial interest were discussed in preparation for the 6th Joint Economic Commission meeting. Discussions covered issues related to a possible new line of credit, a bilateral Free Trade Agreement, bilateral cooperation in road and rail connectivity, customs cooperation, Science & Technology, Agriculture, Civil Aviation and trade.