

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4088

ANSWERED ON:20.04.2005

VISIT OF INDIAN AND FOREIGN DELEGATIONS

Gaikwad Shri Eknath Mahadeo;Mane Smt. Nivedita;Muqueem Shri Mohammed;Nayak Shri Ananta;Singh Shri Kirti Vardhan;Singh Shri Sugrib;Tripathy Shri Braja Kishore;Vijay Krishna Shri ;Yaskhi Shri Madhu Goud;Yerrannaidu Shri Kinjarapu

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the President of Maldives and Prime Minister of Mauritius visited India recently;
- (b) if so, the details of talks held and the agreements signed on the occasion;
- (c) whether the PM and the External Affairs Minister visited various countries in the past two months for improving ties with them;
- (d) if so, the details thereof, country-wise;
- (e) the details of foreign dignitaries who visited India in the past three months along with the agreements signed with them;
- (f) the benefit likely to accrue to India from the above agreements;
- (g) the steps taken by the Government to strengthen ties with Sri Lanka and Myanmar;
- (h) whether Myanmar has agreed to expedite the work of Multi Model transport and Tamati Hydro Projects; and
- (i) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a)&(b) The President of Maldives paid an official visit to India from March 27 to April 1, 2005. The Prime Minister of Mauritius has not visited India this year. The President of Maldives held talks with the President, Prime Minister, External Affairs Minister and the Minister of Defence. The President of Maldives also met the Chairperson, National Advisory Council, and the Leader of the Opposition. The whole range of bilateral issues was discussed during this visit including economic cooperation and the implementation of Indian-aided projects in the Maldives. Regional and international matters of interest were also discussed. No agreements were signed during the visit.

(c)&(d) 1. The Prime Minister of India visited Mauritius from 30 March to 2nd April 2005. During this visit he inaugurated the Cyber tower, which has been constructed by the Indian company M/s Larsen & Toubro and M/s Shapoorji Palonji utilizing a line of credit extended by India. He addressed a special session of the Mauritian National Assembly. During the delegation level talks held in Mauritius various issues of bilateral and multilateral interest were discussed. It was decided that a high-powered committee would be appointed by both the governments to process and finalise the recommendations of the report on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement. India also assured Mauritius of all possible assistance to promote its socio-economic development; in particular India agreed to help Mauritius to improve the quality of their educational institutions at the middle and higher levels. It was also decided that India would carry out a comprehensive survey of their EEZ.

2. The External Affairs Minister (EAM) visited the following countries in the past two months for improving ties with them. Details of the visit, country-wise, are given below:-

PAKISTAN

The External Affairs Minister, K. Natwar Singh visited Islamabad, February 15-17, 2005. This was the first bilateral visit of the External Affairs Minister of India to Pakistan since 1989. The India Pakistan process was taken significantly forward during the visit. EAM met Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and held talks with his counterpart, FM Khurshid Kasuri. Agreements were reached to start bus services between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad and between Lahore and Amritsar, including to religious places such as Nankana Sahib, Pakistan also agreed to work towards early restoration of the Khokrapar Munabao rail link. It was also decided that agreements would be concluded in the coming months, on Pre-notification of Missile Tests, and between Coast Guards and Pakistan's Maritime Security Agency, as well as between the narcotics control authorities of the two countries. Discussions would begin on agreements on Preventing Incidents at Sea, and Reducing the Risk of Nuclear Accident or Unauthorized use of Nuclear Weapons.

AFGHANISTAN

External Affairs Minister visited Kabul on 15 February 2005. He met President Karzai, Baba-e-Millat and former King Zahir Shah, and Foreign Minister Dr. Abdullah. During the visit, he inaugurated the new surgical block of Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health (IGICH), which has been reconstructed with Indian assistance and handed over 49 vehicles to the Afghan National Army. A package of support to IGICH was also announced, including training of doctors and paramedics in India and setting up of a diagnostic centre at IGICH.

MYANMAR

EAM paid an official visit to Myanmar, 24-27 March 2005 at the invitation of Myanmar's Minister of Foreign Affairs, U. Nyan Win. EAM's visit took place against the backdrop of the State visit to India by Myanmar's Head of State, Senior General Than Shwe in October 2004, and was aimed at carrying forward the on-going high-level dialogue between India and Myanmar. During his visit, EAM called on the Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council, Senior General Than Shwe and Prime Minister Lt. General Soe Win. He also held wide-ranging discussions with his counterpart U. Nyan Win, spanning the entire gamut of bilateral issues. India's security concerns in the Northeast, cross-border infrastructure development projects, in particular the Kaladan multi-modal transport project and the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, and energy cooperation including the proposed India-Bangladesh-Myanmar gas pipeline and the Tamanthi Hydro-electric Power project figured on the agenda. Apart from a review of bilateral relations, the visit provided an opportunity to discuss regional and global issues of mutual interest.

SOUTH AFRICA

EAM visited South Africa March 9-11, 2005 to participate in the Trilateral Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) Dialogue Forum. A Cape Town communiqué was issued at the conclusion of this meeting.

UK

EAM visited UK 9-10 March 2005. He held bilateral talks with Foreign Secretary Jack Straw. They also exchanged views on regional & international issues of mutual concern.

(e)&(f) The details of the foreign dignitaries who visited India in the past three months are given below. Details of the agreements signed with them, and their likely benefits to India are also outlined below:-

BHUTAN

(I) At the invitation of the President of India, His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck, King of Bhutan, paid a six-day State Visit to India from January 24 to 29, 2005 as Chief Guest for the Republic Day. During the State Visit, the following three Memoranda of Understanding were signed on January 25, 2005:

- i) Preparation of Detailed Project Report for:
 - a) Punatshangchhu (Stage-II) Hydropower Project
 - b) Mangdechhu Hydropower Project;
- ii) Establishment of Railway Links between bordering towns of India and Bhutan;
- iii) Cooperation in the field of Agriculture and allied sectors.

The MOUs in the above fields are expected to contribute towards-

- (i) enhanced power generation in Bhutan to meet India's energy needs,
- (ii) enhanced trade through improved border infrastructure,
- (iii) widening the scope of bilateral cooperation.

(II) Her Majesty Ashi Sangay Choden Wangchuck, the Queen of Bhutan in her capacity as UNFPA's Goodwill Ambassador paid a goodwill visit to India, February 6 - 21, 2005. During her stay in India, the Queen met Smt. Meira Kumar, Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment. She also visited Jaipur, Mumbai and Ahmedabad and interacted with several organizations engaged with issues such as population matters, HIV AIDS and women's welfare.

NEPAL

The Foreign Minister of Nepal, Ramesh Nath Pandey visited India March 7-9, 2005. The visiting FM called on EAM and discussed internal matters, current political and security situation in Nepal.

AFGHANISTAN

President Karzai came on a `working` visit to India from 23-25 February 2005. He called on the President and had delegation level talks with the Prime Minister. Two MOUs were signed during the visit: (a) MOU on Cooperation in the field of Media and Information and (b) MOU on Cooperation in the field of Civil Aviation. While the MOU in the field of Media and Information calls for greater interaction between media persons and radio and TV organizations of the two countries, the MOU in the field of Civil Aviation is aimed at building capacity and strengthening institutional structure of Afghan civil aviation sector. These MOUs will further strengthen the bilateral relations between the two countries.

IRAN

Iranian Foreign Minister Dr.Kamal Kharrazi visited New Delhi on 21-22 February 2005 for the 14th session of the India-Iran Joint Commission Meeting. Two MOUs were signed during the visit: (a) MOU promoting and preserving the Common Cultural Heritage of India and Iran and (b) MOU on outcome of 14th Joint Commission Meeting.

NEW ZEALAND

The Minister of Foreign Affairs & Trade, Government of New Zealand, Phil Goff visited India 2-5 March 2005. He called on the Minister of External Affairs and held discussions on bilateral issues pertaining to trade and economic matters, agriculture, people to people contacts and education. Both the Ministers expressed satisfaction on increasing interaction in areas of education, tourism and the entertainment industry.

VIETNAM

The Foreign Minister of Vietnam, Nguyen Dy. Nien, visited India March 31 to April 4, 2005. He had discussions with EAM and other leaders for strengthening India-Vietnam ties.

INDONESIA

Indonesian Foreign Minister, Dr. Hassan Wirajuda led a delegation which included Health Minister Siti Fadila Supari, to India to attend the Second Joint Commission Meeting on 1 March 2005. The Indian delegation was led by External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh. The meeting expressed concern and sympathy for the victims of the Tsunami that struck both countries on 26 December 2004, agreed to strengthen and deepen bilateral engagement. The Joint Commission also reviewed the relations between the two countries. The meeting identified a range of areas for bilateral cooperation including economic and trade relations, defence and security ties, pharmaceuticals and health, banking sector, investment, agriculture, transportation, tourism and culture, education, technical cooperation, promotion of women's welfare, science and technology, space technology and application, biotechnology, energy and mineral resources, legal cooperation and consular matters. The Agreed Minutes were signed by the two Foreign Ministers.

THAILAND

Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhon of the Kingdom of Thailand paid an official visit to India from 27.2.05 to 10.3.05.

ITALY

The President of Italy Carlo Azeglio Ciampi visited India February 12-16, 2005. Seven MOUs in the field of science & technology were signed during the visit. These MoUs are expected to result in the creation of capacity building in the field of science & technology.

UK

UK Foreign Secretary Jack Straw visited India February 16-18, 2005. An Agreement on Transfer of Prisoners and an MOU on Return of Failed Asylum Seekers were signed during the visit. The agreements are expected to result in an improvement in the management and regulation of cases coming within these categories.

BELGIUM

Crown Prince Philippe visited India from 13 to 19 March 2005. An MoU for Cooperation in Preservation of Historical Monuments and five MoUs in the field of trade & investment between industry bodies on either side were signed during the visit. These MOUs are expected to result in the strengthening of the capacity for preservation of historical monuments and creating a better environment for promotion of trade and investment.

AUSTRIA

President of Austria, Dr. Heinz Fischer paid a State visit to India, February 16-21, 2005. The Austrian President was accompanied by a high level delegation including Federal Minister for Economics and Labour, Martin Bartenstein, Chief Minister of Tyrol, Herwig Van Staa and the Chief Minister of Salzburg, Gabriele Burgstaller and President of Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, Christoph Leitl. Dr. Fischer called on the President of India Dr. Abdul Kalam and held talks with the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. President Fischer held separate meetings with the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, the External Affairs Minister and the Defence

Minister. President Fischer also had a meeting with the Chairperson, UPA. President Fischer and the accompanying delegation visited Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Mysore. In Delhi and Mumbai, President Fischer addressed captains of Indian business and industry, under the auspices of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). The visit provided a fillip to the traditionally warm and substantial bilateral ties.

The following bilateral agreements were signed during the visit:

- i) An Agreement on Infrastructure Cooperation in Health Sector.
- ii) Memorandum of Understanding on Development of Collaboration between the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh and the Medical University Innsbruck.

The agreements signed are likely to benefit both sides in the economic and health spheres, where expertise of both sides can be shared for the common benefit.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport, Milan Simonovsky visited India February 8-12, 2005. He attended the IETF, 2005, New Delhi. He also met the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, and the Minister of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises. No agreement was signed during the visit.

FINLAND

Finnish Foreign Minister, Erkki Tuomioja visited India to participate in the Helsinki Process meeting in New Delhi February 6-10, 2005. During the visit, he held talks with EAM. A reception was hosted by MOS E. Ahamad. No agreement was signed during the visit.

ICELAND

President of Iceland, Olafur Ragnar Grimsson paid a visit to India February 3- 9, 2005 to participate in the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit organized by TERI. During the visit, he called on the President. He held separate meetings with the Prime Minister, the Chairperson UPA, EAM and MOS (Civil Aviation). No agreement was signed during the visit.

MALTA

Dr. Michael Frendo, Maltese Foreign Minister visited India during 7-12 March 2005 and met EAM. Bilateral relations and regional developments were discussed during the meeting. During the visit the Agreement on Protocol of Consultations between the Ministry of External Affairs of Government of India and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malta was signed on 7 March 2005. The Protocol signed would increase interactions at the official level between the two countries.

VENEZUELA

On the invitation of the President of India, President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela paid a State Visit to India from 4th-7th March 2005 leading a delegation of Cabinet Ministers, senior bureaucrats and leading business executives. This is the first State Visit by a Venezuelan President to India. President Chavez had meetings with our President and Prime Minister, EAM and Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas called on President Chavez. The President also visited Kolkata and Bangalore. In Kolkata he addressed a public meeting and also visited a Gram Panchayat to study its working.

2. The following agreements were signed during the visit:-

- (i) MOU on India-Venezuela Joint Commission
- (ii) MOU on Cooperation in the field of Space
- (iii) Agreement on cooperation in the field of Hydrocarbons
- (iv) MOU in the Area of Biotechnology
- (v) MOU between ONGC Videsh Ltd. and PDVSA, the Venezuelan State Petroleum Company
- (vi) MOU between IRCON and IAFE, the Venezuelan Railway Authority

3. The two sides agreed on the urgent need for reforms of the United Nations and expansion of the Security Council to reflect the new realities of the international situation. The Venezuelan side expressed support to India's candidature for permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council.

PARAGUAY

Dr. (Mrs.) Leila Rachid, Minister of External Relations of Paraguay visited India 18-23 March, 2005 to attend the G-20 meeting as well as to hold bilateral talks. During her visit she had a meeting with EAM and delegation level talks with MOS Rao Inderjit Singh on issues of mutual interest, in the context of the MoU on Consultation Mechanism signed on 2 October 2002. No agreement was signed during the visit.

UZBEKISTAN

The Uzbek President, Islam Karimov visited India from 4-6 March 2005. He was accompanied by the Uzbek First Deputy Prime Minister, Uzbek Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education, Minister of Defence and Chairman of the Committee for Foreign Policy of the Senate of Uzbekistan. The following bilateral Agreements between India and Uzbekistan were signed during the visit:

1. Agreement on cooperation in Military and Military-Technical areas between the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of India
2. Exchange Programme between the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Government of the Republic of India on cooperation in the field of Education
3. Programme of Cooperation between the Ministry of Culture of the Government of Republic of India and the Ministry of Culture and Sports of the Government of Republic of Uzbekistan for the period 2005-2007
4. Agreement between the Government of Republic of India and the Government of Republic of Uzbekistan on Cooperation in the sphere of Support of Small and Private Entrepreneurship

In addition to the above, 8 Agreements/MOUs were signed between the organizations of the two countries which are as follows:

1. Agreement on cooperation between the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan.
2. Agreement on cooperation between the Federations of Indian Export Organizations and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan.
3. Memorandum of Understanding between the State Trading Corporation of India Ltd. and the Agency for Foreign Economic Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan.
4. Protocol of Understanding between Ghalib Institute (India) and Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies (Uzbekistan).
5. Memorandum of Understanding between Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and the University of World Economy and Diplomacy, Tashkent.
6. Protocol of Intention for cooperation in Tourism between the Tourism Development Corporation of India and the National Company of Uzbekistan `Uzbektourism`.
7. Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the Export-Import Bank of India and the National Bank for Foreign Economic Relations of Uzbekistan .
8. Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the State Bank of India and the National Bank for Foreign Economic Relations of Uzbekistan.

These Agreements are likely to lead to strengthening bilateral cooperation in diverse fields.

CANADA

Prime Minister of Canada, Paul Martin visited India at the invitation of Prime Minister 17-18 January 2005. During the visit no agreement was signed.

He held discussions with the Prime Minister that focused around the expansion of bilateral cooperation between India and Canada. Both leaders agreed to direct designated scientific advisers on each side to report on advancing S&T collaboration. They agreed to support a CEO Roundtable that would make recommendations for expanding economic ties. It was also decided to strengthen environmental cooperation. Both sides agreed on the need for improved visa and consular services as part of the efforts to strengthen people-to-people links.

USA

Secretary of State of USA, Dr. Condoleezza Rice visited India 15-16 March 2005 at the invitation of External Affairs Minister. During the visit no agreement was signed.

Dr. Rice had meetings with PM, EAM and the Chairperson of the UPA. Both sides discussed the entire range of issues of bilateral, regional and global importance. There was forward movement on starting an energy dialogue in all its dimensions, on advancing our defence relationship, and in imparting our relationship a larger strategic framework. In the context of UN reform, the need to accommodate major rising powers like India in international institutions was recognized.

GAMBIA

(i) Minister of Foreign Affairs of Gambia, Sidi Morro Sanneh visited India January 11-13, 2005. This was the first visit by a high-level delegation from Gambia. He discussed issues of bilateral and multilateral concern with the EAM. It has resulted in establishing close links between the two countries. Both sides agreed to work together in multilateral fora. No agreement was signed during the visit.

(ii) Foreign Minister of the Gambia, Sidi Morro Sanneh visited India March 5-10, 2005. He held discussions on bilateral issues to strengthen the bilateral cooperation. No agreement was signed during the visit.

SENEGAL

Dr. Cheikh Tidiane Gadio, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Senegal visited India from 23-24 January 2005. The Minister conveyed his government's condolences at the Tsunami disaster and the passing away of Shri Narasimha Rao & Shri J. N. Dixit. The visit resulted in the reiteration of the close ties between India and Senegal. No agreement was signed during the visit.

CONGO

(i) Foreign Minister of Democratic Republic of Congo, Raymond Ramazani Baya visited India February 1-4, 2005. He discussed issues of bilateral and multilateral concern. The visit resulted in establishing close links between both countries. Both sides agreed to work together in establishing stronger economic linkages. No agreement was signed during the visit.

(ii) Vice President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Jean Pierre Bemba visited India March 1-4, 2005. He attended the Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership. The visit has resulted in strengthening of bilateral relations. No agreement was signed during the visit.

CHAD

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Chad, Nagoum Yamassoum visited India March 1-4, 2005. He attended the Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership and discussed bilateral issues. It has resulted in establishing close bilateral relations. No agreement was signed during the visit.

NIGER

Madame Aichtou Mindaoudou, Minister for Foreign Affairs and African Integration & Cooperation of the Republic of Niger and Mohamed Abdouli, Minister of Mines & Energy visited India March 1-4, 2005. They attended the Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership. The visit has resulted in establishing close bilateral relations. No agreement was signed during the visit.

GHANA

Prof. Mike Oquaye, Minister of Energy of Ghana visited India from 1-4 March 2005. He attended the Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership. The visit has resulted in establishing close bilateral relations. No agreement was signed during the visit.

NIGERIA

Foreign Minister of Nigeria, Oluyemi Adeniji visited India March 21-23, 2005. He held discussions with EAM on issues relating to UNSC, bilateral relations. The visit has resulted in strengthening and reaffirming our close relations. No agreement was signed during the visit.

MADAGASCAR

Foreign Minister of Madagascar General Marcel Ranjeva visited India from 21-25 March 2005. No agreement was signed during the visit.

(g) There is a regular exchange of high-level visits and institutionalized interaction at the official level in the case of both Sri Lanka and Myanmar. The Sri Lankan President, Prime Minister, Speaker, Foreign Minister and Leader of Opposition have all visited India in the past year. Myanmar Head of State Senior General Than Shwe visited India in October 2004 and EAM visited Myanmar in March 2005.

In the case of Sri Lanka, negotiations to deepen and widen the Free Trade Agreement into a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement are underway; a Joint Working Group on Fisheries has been constituted; funds are being disbursed from three credit lines; a number of tsunami relief measures and projects have been and are under implementation; and infrastructural and communication linkages have been augmented.

In the case of Myanmar, India is also undertaking a variety of economic and developmental initiatives. These include projects in diverse fields such as roads, railways, power, telecommunications, information technology, science and technology and higher education. India and Myanmar are also working together to enhance cooperation in the hydrocarbon sector.

(h) & (i) The Government of India and the Government of Myanmar are keen to expedite progress on the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transport Project and the Tamanthi Hydro-electric Power Project. Negotiations are underway between the two Governments to finalize all Agreements pertaining to the construction, maintenance and financing of the Kaladan project. After the Agreements are concluded, construction would begin. The pre-Feasibility Report on the Tamanthi Project is under examination. If accepted, a Detailed Project Report would be commissioned.