

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:210

ANSWERED ON:07.12.2005

SAARC SUMMIT

Chitthan Shri N.S.V.;Owaisi Shri Asaduddin

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether the SAARC Summit was held recently at Dhaka;
- (b) if so, the details of issues discussed;
- (c) the details of Indian representatives who attended the said Summit;
- (d) whether matters regarding cross border terrorism, trade and commerce with member countries, etc. also came up for discussion;
- (e) if so, the outcome thereof;
- (f) whether any agreements have been signed with SAARC countries on avoidance of double taxation, customs facilitation and setting up of arbitration council;
- (g) if so, the details thereof and the time by which these agreements are likely to be implemented; and
- (h) the details of benefits likely to be accrued to India as a result thereof?

Answer

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

(a) to (h) - A statement is placed on the Table of the House

STATEMENT REFERRED IN PARTS (a) to (h) of LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO 210 TO BE ANSWERED ON 07.12.2005 REGARDING 'SAARC SUMMIT'

(a) to (h): The Thirteenth SAARC Summit was held in Dhaka on November 12-13, 2005. The Indian delegation was led by the Prime Minister. The other members of the delegation were Shri E. Ahamed, Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri M.K. Narayanan, National Security Adviser, Shri Shyam Saran, Foreign Secretary and other senior officials of the Government of India.

The Summit had an exhaustive agenda. The Summit discussed a wide range of issues including regional cooperation in the areas of trade, commerce, poverty alleviation, social challenges, national disasters, people-to-people contact and cultural cooperation. Other issues discussed at the Summit were SAARC's external linkages, strengthening institutional mechanisms and the funding mechanisms to implement various proposals.

The Summit also discussed cooperation in counter terrorism. There was a strong condemnation of terrorism in the Summit Declaration and a renewed commitment to eliminate this scourge. For the first time, there was a clear reference to avoiding double standards in tackling this challenge.

Three important trade facilitation agreements were signed at the Summit, namely:

- The Limited Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation and Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters
- The Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters
- The Agreement on the Establishment of SAARC Arbitration Council

The agreement on avoidance of double taxation is to enter into force 30 days after notification by the SAARC Secretariat regarding completion of all formalities, including ratification, by all SAARC member states, by June 30, 2006. The agreement on customs facilitation is to enter into force on January 1, 2006, upon completion of formalities, including ratification by member states, and issuance of notification by SAARC Secretariat. The agreement on setting up of the SAARC Arbitration Council is to enter into force after ratification by all member states and upon issue of notification by SAARC Secretariat.

The results of the Summit are in consonance with India's objectives and provide new opportunities to further the process of regional economic integration and cooperation in South Asia.