

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:464

ANSWERED ON:22.02.2006

VISITS BY FOREIGN DIGNITARIES

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Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of foreign dignitaries who visited India during the last three months, till date;
- (b) the issues on which deliberations were held with them;
- (c) whether any bilateral agreements were signed with them;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) the details of visits undertaken by the Prime Minister and External Affairs Ministers during the above period;
- (f) the details of discussions held and the outcome thereof; and
- (g) the steps taken by the Government to further improve the relations with these countries?

Answer

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

Part-I (a) to (d) & (g): Details of foreign dignitaries who visited India during the last three months, till date; the issues on which deliberations were held between them; whether any bilateral agreements were signed with them; the details thereof; and the steps taken by the Government to further improve the relations with these countries are given below, country-wise:

1. BHUTAN

Foreign Minister Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk visited India from December 16-17, 2005. He met former Minister of State for External Affairs Shri Rao Inderjit Singh and Foreign Secretary. Discussions centred on bilateral issues.

Intensive and regular bilateral exchanges and consultations at all levels have been taking place to strengthen the close bilateral relationship.

2. SRI LANKA

The Sri Lankan Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Mangala Samaraweera paid an official visit to India from November 30 to December 1, 2005. The visit was in preparation of the state visit of the Sri Lankan President Mr. Mahinda Rajapakse. The President of Sri Lanka visited India from December 27-30, 2005. The two sides took stock of the entire gamut of India - Sri Lanka bilateral relations and reaffirmed their resolve to further consolidate the existing close and friendly relations. Discussions covered international and regional issues of mutual interest.

India's relations with Sri Lanka have been further strengthened through high level exchanges, expansion of bilateral engagement in various fields and through provision of assistance in building national capacities in Sri Lanka.

3. THAILAND

HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn visited India from 18-23 November 2005. The Princess was given the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development. She also held talks on bilateral issues with MOS (EA).

HRH Princess Chulabhorn Mahidol visited India from 21 - 29 November 2005. The purpose of HRH Princess Chulabhorn Mahidol's visit was to attend the Third General Assembly and International Conference 2005 on 'Women's Impact on Science and Technology in the new Millennium' held in Bangalore.

4. INDONESIA

Dr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of Indonesia paid a state visit to India from November 21-24, 2005. He was accompanied by Coordinating Minister for Economy, State Secretary, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Defence, Minister of Industry and Minister of Trade. The deliberations were held on bilateral, regional and global issues. Both sides agreed to utilize the opportunity to establish closer ties in various fields such as defence, information technology, bio-technology, oil sector, space and other areas. A Joint Declaration and the following MoUs were signed during the visit:

- (i) Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Agriculture of Republic of India and the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of Republic of Indonesia on Marine and Fisheries Cooperation;
- (ii) Memorandum of Understanding between Government of Republic of India and Government of Republic of Indonesia on the Establishment of a Joint Study Group to examine the feasibility of Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA);
- (iii) Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of External Affairs of Republic of India and the Department of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Indonesia on Training Cooperation.

Government has taken further steps to strengthen relations with the ASEAN countries in consonance with India's 'Look East Policy' and is actively pursuing the areas identified for cooperation during the above visit.

5. MAURITIUS

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mauritius Mr. Madan Murlidhar Dulloo visited India from January 17-20, 2006 to attend the CII Partnership Summit held in Kolkata.

6. SAUDI ARABIA

His Majesty King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, visited India from January 24-27, 2006 and was the Chief Guest at this year's Republic Day celebrations. Issues of bilateral and international interests were discussed which included cooperation in the energy sector, IT, technology and education, mutual investments including in infrastructure, cooperation in combating crimes, and frequent and more regular exchange of high-level visits. Following Agreements were signed during the visit:

- (i) Bilateral Investment Promotion & Protection Agreement (BIPPA)
- (ii) Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement/Convention (DTAA/DTAC)
- (iii) MoU on Combating Crimes
- (iv) Cooperation Agreement in the field of Youth & Sports.

Necessary follow-up actions to the discussions held and agreements signed during the visit of His Majesty King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia (24-27, 2006) are currently being taken to further enhance our close bilateral relations.

7. MONGOLIA

Mr. Ts. Munh Orgil, Foreign Minister of Mongolia visited India from December 22-27, 2005. Deliberations on consular, cultural matters, etc. were held during his visit. Following four agreements were signed:

- (i) Mutual waiver of Visa requirements for holder of diplomatic and official passports;
- (ii) Programme of Cooperation in the field of Culture for the years 2006-2008 and its associated financial and general provisions (Cultural Exchange Programme 2006-2008);

(iii) MoU on Cooperation to establish an Indo-Mongolian Friendship Agropark in Darkhan Uul Aimag, Mongolia; and

(iv) Agreement on leasing of the Chancery Premises in Ulaanbaatar.

8. JAPAN

Mr. Taro Aso, Foreign Minister, visited India from January 3-4, 2006. Bilateral, regional and multilateral issues were discussed during the visit. Notes were exchange on the Feasibility Study Survey for the Freight Corridor Project agreed upon during the visit of Japanese PM Koizumi in April 2005.

India and Japan are engaged in the process of concretizing Global Partnership in the 21st Century through high-level visits, deepening economic relations and growing mutually beneficial exchanges in energy, science and technology, defence, cultural and academic fields. During the visit of Foreign Minister Taro Aso on January 3-4, 2006, the two countries agreed to hold Foreign Ministers' dialogue in the future from a strategic perspective and have annual Joint Secretary/Director General-level consultations on Disarmament and Non-proliferation, with the objective of promoting commonalities and enlarging areas of convergence for mutual cooperation in a constructive manner.

9. THE BAHAMAS

Mr. Frederick A. Mitchel, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Public Service of The Bahamas visited India from January 22-26, 2006. Deliberations were held on exploring cooperation in the fields of technical, economic, maritime, education, shipping, IT, culture etc.

10. PANAMA

First Vice President and Foreign Minister of Panama Mr. Samuel Lewis Navarro visited India from November 18-24, 2005. Deliberations were held on issues of bilateral cooperation, science and technology, IT and healthcare sectors, avenues for Indian investment in Panama, speedy issue of business visas for Indian businessmen, India's interest in Central American Bank for Integration. Exchange of Letters on relaxation of issue of business visa by Panama to Indian businessmen was signed.

11. CZECH REPUBLIC

Prime Minister Jiri Paroubek of Czech Republic also visited India from January 17-19, 2006. Deliberations on bilateral relations were held during his visit.

The visit further strengthened political, economic, commercial and cultural ties existing between the two countries.

12. IRELAND

Mr. Bertie Ahern, Prime Minister of Ireland, accompanied by Mr. Micheal Martin, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment; Mr. John O'Donoghue, Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism; and Ms. Mary Hanafin, Minister for Education and Science visited India from January 16-21, 2006. Following agreements were signed during the visit:

(i) Agreement on Cultural Cooperation;

(ii) Agreement on S & T Cooperation;

(iii) MoU on Cooperation between the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) and Science Foundation of Ireland (SFI); and

(iv) MoU between Association of Biotechnology - Led Enterprises (ABLE) and the Irish BioIndustry Association (IBIA).

13. NETHERLANDS

Dr. Jan Peter Balkenende, Prime Minister of Netherlands, visited India from January 17-20, 2006.

14. SWEDEN

King of Sweden Carl XVI Gustaf visited India from November 19-26, 2005. King as Patron of the Royal Technology Mission called on Rashtrapati and discussed matters of mutual interest.

15. NORWAY

Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg visited India from December 7-9, 2005. Deliberations were held on bilateral relations. Both sides agreed to collaborate in S&T and to set up an International Institute for Precursor Studies in India.

The visits of King of Sweden and Prime Minister of Norway further strengthened our existing bilateral relations in political, economic, commercial and cultural fields. As a result of these visits, it is expected that exchanges by business delegations, scholars, academicians, parliamentarians etc. would take place more frequently from these two countries to India and help in expanding our bilateral cooperation.

Part-II (e) to (g): The details of visits undertaken by the Prime Minister and External Affairs Minister during the above period, the details of discussions held and outcome thereof, and the steps taken by the Government to further improve the relations with these countries are given below, country-wise:

MALAYSIA

Prime Minister visited Malaysia from December 12-14, 2005 to attend the 4th India- ASEAN Summit and 1st East Asia Summit held in Kuala Lumpur. Deliberations were held to enhance synergies in overall scheme of cooperation between India and ASEAN, including trade and investment, S&T, HRD, people to people contacts etc. The meeting adopted a the 'Kuala Lumpur Declaration' outlining the objects and modalities of the East Asia Summit. On the margins, Prime Minister had bilateral meetings with President of South Korea and Prime Ministers of China, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar and Vietnam. Bilateral, regional and global issues were discussed during these meetings.

Prime Minister also attended the 1st East Asia Summit held on 14 December 2005. Deliberations were held to explore way forward for the East Asia Summit, this being the inaugural Summit. The meeting adopted a Declaration on Combating Avian Influenza.

The government has taken several steps to further strengthen relations with the countries of East Asia in consonance with India's 'Look East Policy'.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Prime Minister visited Russian Federation from December 4-7, 2005. Entire gamut of bilateral relations and international issues of mutual concern were discussed.

- (i) Agreement on Reciprocal Protection of Intellectual Property Rights in the field of Military - Technical Cooperation;
- (ii) Agreement on Safeguard Technologies while implementing long-term cooperation in the area of joint development, operation and use of the GLONASS System for peaceful purposes; and
- (iii) Agreement between the Indian Space Research Organization and the Federal Space Agency of the Russian Federation on Cooperation in the field of Solar Physics and Solar-Terrestrial relationships within the framework of the Coronas - Photon Project.

The Government of India has entered into an arrangement of annual summit level meeting and, annual sessions of the two Inter-Governmental Commissions respectively on Military - Technical Cooperation and on Trade, Economic, Cultural, Scientific and Technological Cooperation. There are a number of established consultation and cooperation programmes between various other Departments, including the Foreign Offices, and regular high-level and technical-level exchanges to further improve cooperative relations with the countries of the CIS & the Caucasian region. Our political, economic and cultural relations have all witnessed an upward trend in the last few years with the signing of various agreements with these countries and the identification of new areas of cooperation. Joint Commissions have been set up with many of these countries and we have defence cooperation with some of them.