

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2994  
ANSWERED ON:05.09.2007  
RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES  
Hussain Shri Anwar

**Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

he details of the efforts made by the Government to improve its relations with the neighbouring countries in the last two years?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA)

India accords the highest priority to forging closer political, economic and cultural ties with its neighbours. During the last two years, India's engagement with its neighbours at the highest level and through ministerial and other visits has expanded considerably (details are given in the Annexure).

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2994 REGARDING 'RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES' FOR ANSWER ON 05.09.2007

India hosted the successful 14th SAARC Summit at New Delhi from April 3-4, 2007. The SAARC countries admitted Afghanistan as the 8th Member, signed agreements on the establishment of the SAARC Food Bank, a South Asian University and agreed to improve physical, economic and people connectivity and promote cooperation in water, energy, food, environment, education, health, cultural exchanges, terrorism and other fields.

(ii) India and Bhutan signed a Friendship Treaty on February 8, 2007 to raise their relationship to an even higher level. India supported Nepal in the consolidation of peace process and in meeting her immediate priorities and needs. India is supporting the reconstruction of Afghanistan with humanitarian, financial and project assistance worth US \$ 750 million.

(iii) India's economic cooperation and trade with Sri Lanka and relations with Bangladesh, Myanmar and Maldives were further strengthened through political, economic, technical and cultural initiatives. High-level contacts, meetings of the Joint Commission, Composite Dialogue and other meetings at Senior Officials level to resolve outstanding issues continued with Pakistan.

(iv) During the visit of the Chinese President to India in November 2006, India and China adopted a "ten-pronged strategy" to upgrade relations to a qualitatively new level. India and Indonesia also decided to establish a new strategic partnership during the visit of the Indonesian President to India in November 2005; relations with Indonesia and Thailand were strengthened through cooperation in new fields.