

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2277

ANSWERED ON:29.08.2007

VISIT OF FOREIGN DIGNITARIES

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

- (a) the details of visits of foreign dignitaries to India during the last six months till date;
- (b) the issues on which deliberations were held with them;
- (c) whether any bilateral agreement was signed with them;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) the details of visits undertaken by the Prime Minister and the External Affairs Minister abroad 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**

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

(a) to (d) 12 Heads of State/Government, 7 Vice Presidents/Deputy Prime Ministers/Crown Prince/Princess and 24 Foreign Ministers and other dignitaries visited India during last six months. Details of issues discussed with visiting foreign dignitaries and bilateral agreements signed are provided in Annexure I.

(e) to (f) PM visited one country and EAM visited 9 countries during the period. Details of discussions and outcome of these visits are given in Annexure II.

(g) The Government are engaged with these countries through high-level visits and other initiatives to expand further our relations with them.

ANNEXURE I REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (D) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2277 REGARDING 'VISIT OF FOREIGN DIGNITARIES' FOR ANSWER ON 29.08.2007

INCOMING VISITS

1. AFGHANISTAN

H.E. President Karzai visited India on April 2-5, 2007 to attend the 14th SAARC Summit. During his visit, he met PM and both sides discussed issues relating to SAARC and regional development, India's assistance to Afghanistan and terrorism. A MoU for setting up of the India-Afghan Foundation was also signed.

2. AUSTRIA

Dr. Ursula Plassnik, Federal Minister for EU and International Affairs of the Republic of Austria, paid an official visit to India from March 15-18, 2007. The Austrian Minister called on PM, met with Minister of Science & Technology and Earth Sciences and Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment and discussed matters to promote bilateral cooperation.

3. BAHRAIN

The Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Bahrain, Shaikh Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa visited India from 19-22 Mar 2007. The leaders of India and Bahrain in their discussion recalled the historical ties between the two countries and stressed the need for diversifying and consolidating this relationship and in that context warmly welcomed the opening of the Embassy of Bahrain in New Delhi on 21 March 2007. Agreements signed during the visit of the Crown Prince included (i) Executive Programme for Cultural Cooperation (2007-2010) and (ii) Memorandum of Cooperation between Prasar Bharati and Bahrain Radio and TV Corporation.

4. BANGLADESH

The Chief Advisor of the caretaker Government of Bangladesh, H.E. Mr. Fakhruddin Ahmed as well as the Foreign Affairs Advisor Mr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury visited India to participate in the SAARC Summit in April 2007. On the sidelines of the Summit, they met PM and EAM respectively. Both sides agreed that the institutionalised bilateral mechanisms would be revived at an early date to ensure movement of bilateral relations in a positive direction.

## 5. BELARUS

The Foreign Minister of Belarus, Mr. Sergei Martynov visited India on 22-23 February 2007. He met External Affairs Minister, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for External Affairs and discussed bilateral relations, including bilateral trade and economic relations and the forthcoming visit of the President of Belarus to India.

President of Belarus, H.E. Mr. Aleksandr Lukashenko paid a state visit to India from 15-16 April 2007. He met our President, Vice President, Prime Minister and External Affairs Minister and discussed bilateral relations and exchanged views on issues of international and mutual interest. Five agreements in the areas of culture, S&T, extradition, agriculture and Belarus` WTO accession were signed and a Joint Statement was adopted during the visit.

## 6. BENIN

Foreign Minister Madame Aladji Boni Diallo visited India from 9-11 May 2007 to deliver a special message from the President of Benin to PM. MOS (AS) had a meeting with the Minister on 10th May, 2007 to discuss matters of mutual interest.

## 7. BHUTAN

Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Bhutan, H.E. Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk visited India from 1-5 April 2007 for the 14th SAARC Summit in New Delhi.

## 8. BRAZIL

Mr. Celso Amorim, Minister of External Relations of Brazil, visited India from April 11-13, 2007. The visiting Minister had meetings with PM, EAM and MOS, co-chaired the India - Brazil Joint Commission with EAM.

Mr. Celso Amorim, Minister of External Relations of Brazil visited India from July 15-18, 2007 to attend the fourth IBSA Ministerial level Trilateral Commission Meeting. During the meeting with EAM, discussion focussed on bilateral, regional and international issues including UN reforms, climate change and South-South Cooperation.

The President of Brazil, H.E. Mr. Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva paid a state visit to India from 3-5 June 2007. The President had intensive discussions with our President and Prime Minister. Our EAM, the Leader of the Opposition and the Chairperson of UPA called on Brazilian President. Both sides reviewed the state of bilateral relations and expressed satisfaction at the pace at which mutually beneficial cooperation was developed.

The agreements /MOU signed during the visit of Brazilian President are: (i) Agreement on Mutual Assistance in Customs Matters; (ii) Agreement on Audio Visual Co-production; (iii) Implementing arrangement regarding Cooperation in Augmentation of Brazilian Earth Station for Receiving and Processing data from Indian Remote Sensing Satellites; (iv) Academic Exchange Programme; (v) MOU on India - Brazil CEOs Forum; (vi) Heads of Agreement between ONGC,OVL and Petrobras and (vii) MOU between National Council for Applied Economic Research and Institute for Applied Economic Research of Brazil.

## 9. CAMBODIA

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Cambodia Mr. Hor Namhong visited India from May 17-19, 2007. It was a preparatory visit for the State Visit of the Prime Minister of Cambodia to India. The DPM had bilateral meetings with PM, EAM and FM. A MOU on setting up an English Language Training Centre was signed during the visit.

## 10. CHINA

Foreign Minister of China Mr. Li Zhaoxing attended the 14th SAARC Summit held in New Delhi from 3-4 April 2007, wherein China was admitted as an `Observer.`

## 11. COMMONWEALTH

Dr. Don McKinnon, Commonwealth Secretary General visited India from 21-23 March 2007 on an official visit. He called on the President, PM and met Minister for Commerce & Industry and MOS for External Affairs. During these meetings, he discussed measures to enhance India`s cooperation with the Commonwealth States.

## 12. CUBA

Mr. Felipe Perez Roque, Minister of External Relations of Cuba visited India from April 11-12, 2007. The visiting Minister discussed strengthening of bilateral relations and NAM issues.

## 13. EL SALVADOR

Mr. Francisco E. Lainez, Minister of External Relations of the Republic of El Salvador visited India from March 4-9, 2007. Strengthening of bilateral relations and cooperation was discussed during his visit.

#### 14. FIJI

Mr. Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, Interim Minister for Foreign Affairs & External Trade visited India from 3-6 March 2007. During his visit, he discussed bilateral issues and sought Indian assistance in the areas of the Election Commission, Code of conduct and Election Voting Machines as well as training of personnel of Fiji Military forces in UN Peacekeeping operations.

#### 15. IRAQ

Dr. Hussain Al-Shahrastani, Minister of Oil led an Iraqi delegation to India for 16th meeting of the Joint Commission from May 22-25, 2007. The Joint Commission reviewed bilateral cooperation in commercial, economic, industrial, scientific and technical spheres. Cooperation in areas of mutual interest such as in trade, oil and gas, banking and financial cooperation, power fertilizers, education and HRD, IT, health and agriculture and construction was discussed. Both sides agreed to follow up the mutually agreed areas of cooperation.

Prime Minister during his meeting with the Iraqi Minister expressed India's support for the Iraqi people and for Iraq's reconstruction.

#### 16. JAPAN

Mr. Taro Aso, Foreign Minister, visited India on 3 April 2007 as Head of the Observer delegation to SAARC.

H.E. Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan visited India from 21-23 August 2007 at the invitation of Prime Minister. PM had productive discussions on global and regional issues with Japanese Prime Minister. They agreed to lay down a roadmap to impart a new dimension to Indo-Japan strategic and global partnership; and to cooperate in the implementation of two important flagship projects - the dedicated Rail Freight Corridor Project and the Delhi- Mumbai Industrial Corridor Project. A Joint Statement was signed by the two Prime Ministers on Enhancement of Cooperation on Environmental Protection and Energy Security.

#### 17. KOREA, REPUBLIC OF

Mr. Song Min-soon, Foreign Minister of Republic of Korea visited India on 3 April, 2007 as head of the Observer delegation to SAARC Summit held in New Delhi.

#### 18. LUXEMBOURG

Dy Prime Minister & Foreign Minister Mr. Jean Asselborn visited India from 19-23 Feb 2007. Bilateral, regional and global issues were discussed during his visit.

#### 19. MALAYSIA

Mr. Dato Seri Syed Hamid Albar, Foreign Minister of Malaysia visited India from April 9-10, 2007 to attend the conference on India-Malaysia Strategic Dialogue.

#### 20. MALDIVES

President of Maldives, H.E. Mr. Abdul Gayoom, accompanied by Foreign Minister Shaheed visited India from 2-5 April 2007 in connection with the 14th SAARC Summit. Matters of bilateral, regional and international interest were discussed.

#### 21. MALTA

The Foreign Minister of Malta Dr. Michael Frendo visited New Delhi from 22-23 March 2007 to attend Commonwealth Connects-International E-Partnership Summit held in New Delhi from 23-24 March 2007. During his visit, he met MOS (EA) and the Minister of Commerce and Industry and had discussions on matters of mutual interest. The visit provided a thrust to our bilateral relations.

#### 22. MEXICO

Mr. E. Sojo, Minister of Economy of Mexico visited India from 17-18 May 2007. Following agreements/MOU were signed:

(i) Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement

(BIPPA)

(ii) An MOU on the Establishment of a Bilateral High Level Group on Trade, Investment and Economic Cooperation.

#### 23. NEPAL

Prime Minister of Nepal H.E. Mr. G.P. Koirala and Foreign Minister Mrs. Sahana Pradhan visited India from April 1-6, 2007 to attend the SAARC Summit held in New Delhi.

#### 24. PAKISTAN

Pakistan Foreign Minister Mr. Khurshid Mahmood Kasuri visited India on 20-22 Feb 2007 leading Pak delegation to attend 5th India-

Pak Joint Commission meeting held on February 21, 2007. EAM and FM of Pakistan discussed and reviewed progress of 8 Technical Level Working Groups formed during 4th Joint Commission held in Islamabad in October 2005. Eight Working Groups covering 8 areas were identified for cooperation namely: Environment, Science & Technology, Tourism, Agriculture, Health, IT& Communication, Education and Information.

Prime Minister of Pakistan H.E. Mr. Shaukat Aziz and Pakistan Foreign Minister Mr. Khurshid Mahmood Kasuri visited India in the first week of April 2007 to attend SAARC Summit in New Delhi. Prime Minister Shri Manmohan Singh met Pakistan Prime Minister on April 4, 2007 on the sidelines of SAARC Summit and discussed a wide range of bilateral issues including trade, energy, banking, air connectivity and other issues. Pakistan Prime Minister assured Prime Minister of India that Pakistan would take early action to return fishing boats seized from Indian fishermen. The two sides also agreed to review the status of each other's citizens held prisoners in the two countries. They agreed to increase air connectivity between India and Pakistan. They also agreed to continue the ongoing discussion on the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline. Pakistan Prime Minister informed Prime Minister of India that Pakistan was ready to export cement to India taking advantage of the duty reduction announced by the Government of India. He also informed that Pakistan is issuing more visas to Sikh Yatris coming from across the world to visit Sikh shrines in Pakistan. The Pakistan Prime Minister thanked the Prime Minister of India for the financial support given to the families of the victims of the Samjhauta train incident. He also complimented Prime Minister of India on the successful and efficient conduct of the SAARC Summit and expressed satisfaction at the content of the discussions at the summit.

## 25. SOUTH AFRICA

Foreign Minister of South Africa, Ms. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma visited India from July 15-18, 2007 to attend the Fourth IBSA Ministerial Level Trilateral Commission Meeting. During the meeting with EAM discussions focussed on bilateral, regional and international issues including UN reforms, terrorism and delay in issue of South African visa to Indian nationals.

## 26. SINGAPORE

Prof. S. Jayakumar, Dy. Prime Minister & Coordinating Minister for National Security, Minister of Law of Singapore visited India from 13-17 March 2007. He was Chief Guest at Parvasi Bhartiya Divas, 2007. He called on PM, EAM, Ministers of Defence, Finance, Home Affairs and National Security Advisor.

## 27. SRI LANKA

Sri Lankan President H.E. Mr. Mahinda Rajapakse visited India in April 2007 to participate in the SAARC Summit. Mr. Rohitha Bogollagama, Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka also accompanied the Sri Lankan President during his visit.

## 28. SYRIA

Mr. Walid Al-Muoaalem, Foreign Minister of Syria visited India from 13-14 August 2007. Discussions were held on issues of bilateral, regional and multilateral interests.

## 29. SWEDEN

Mr. Karl Bildt, Swedish Foreign Minister paid an official visit to India from 1-6 May 2007. He held discussions with PM, EAM, Minister of Defence, Minister of Communications & IT and NSA. Bilateral relations including political, economic and cultural ties as well as regional and multinational issues of mutual interest were discussed.

## 30. THAILAND

HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhom of Thailand paid an official visit to India from March 5-9, 2007. During the New Delhi part of visit on March 6, 2007, the princess called on the Vice President and had a meeting with the Minister of External Affairs. Bilateral, regional and international issues were discussed.

The Thai Prime Minister H.E. Gen. Surayud Chulanont paid a State visit to India from June 25-27, 2007. The visit took place during the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. During the visit, two agreements were signed namely an MOU on Enhanced Cooperation in the Field of Renewable Energy and Executive Programme on Cultural Exchange for the year 2007-2009.

HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhom of Thailand visited India from August 8-9, 2007 at the invitation of EAM. The visit was part of the celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Thailand. During the visit, the Princess inaugurated an exhibition of photographs taken by herself during her previous visits to India; and also a Thai Ramayana performance where she took part in the performance.

## 31.UAE

Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai visited India from 25-26 March 2007. Discussions covered issues of mutual interest viz. strengthening bilateral trade & investment relations, welfare of the Indian Community in UAE and regional issues. Agreements signed by India and UAE during the visit of Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum included (a) Protocol Amending the Agreement for Avoidance of Double Taxation (DTAA), (b) Framework Agreement Between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the UAE for Developing Industrial Relations, (c) MoU for Technical Cooperation between Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and Emirates Authority For Standardization and Metrology (ESMA), (d) MoU for Technical Cooperation in Accreditation Activities between Emirates Authority For Standardization and

Metrology (ESMA) and National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) and (e) MoU for Assistance and Mutual Cooperation between Emirates Securities and Commodities Authority (ESCA) and Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs led an UAE delegation to India for the 9th Session of the Indo-UAE Joint Commission on 6th June, 2007. EAM led the Indian side. Entire range of subjects dealing with bilateral economic, commercial technical and scientific cooperation were covered in the discussions. Special emphasis was laid on enhancing investment cooperation between UAE and India with particular reference to investment from UAE in infrastructure sector.

## 32. VIETNAM

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Vietnam Mr. Pham Gia Khiem visited India from February 25 to March 1, 2007 in connection with the 13th India-Vietnam Joint Commission Meeting held in New Delhi on February 27, 2007. During the visit, he called on Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs. Bilateral, regional and international issues were discussed.

H.E. Mr. Nguyen Tan Dung, Prime Minister of Vietnam paid a State visit to India from July 4-6, 2007. A joint Declaration on the Establishment of a Strategic Partnership was signed during the visit. He called on the President and the Chairperson of the UPA. The Speaker Lok Sabha and the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha called on the Vietnamese Prime Minister. Eight agreements were signed in the presence of the two Prime Ministers during the visit including a MOU on Cooperation in Fisheries and Aquaculture, a Cultural Exchange Programme for the year 2007-2010; a Work Plan in Agricultural Research and Education for 2007-2009, a MOU between the Department of Atomic Energy and the Ministry of Science and Technology of Vietnam; a MOU for Establishing an English Language Training Centre in Danang City, Vietnam; an Educational Exchange Programme; a MOU on the Exchange of Diplomatic Properties and a MOU between Tata Steel and Vietnam Steel Corporation.

ANNEXURE II REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (E) & (F) F LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2277 REGARDING 'VISIT OF FOREIGN DIGNITARIES' FOR ANSWER ON 29.08.2007

## OUTGOING VISITS

### 1. BHUTAN

External Affairs Minister Shri Pranab Mukherjee visited Bhutan from 27-29 July 2007. During the visit, he had an audience with H.M. the King of Bhutan Jigme Kesar Namgyal Wangchuk and held discussions with Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Bhutan Lyonpo Khandu Wangachuk. He and the Bhutanese PM and FM signed an agreement on the implementation of the Punatsangchu I Hydro Electric Project.

### 2. CYPRUS

The External Affairs Minister paid an official visit to Cyprus from 24-26 May 2007. During the visit, EAM met H.E. President Tassos Papadopoulos. Along with his Cypriot counterpart Yorgos Lillikas, who was assisted by the Cypriot Commerce, tourism and Industry Minister, Mr. Antonis Michaelides, EAM presided over the Indo-Cyprus High Level Joint Committee Meeting. EAM also held separate meetings with Cypriot Health Minister Mr. Charis Charalambous and Chairperson of the Foreign Affairs Committee Mr. Averof Neophytou. Bilateral relations including political, economic and cultural ties as well as regional and multinational issues of mutual interest were discussed.

Following agreements were signed during EAM's visit:

- i) Agreement on Combating International Terrorism, Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking.
- ii) Agreement on abolition of Visa Requirement for Diplomatic and Service/Official passports; and
- iii) Cultural Exchange Programme for 2007-2010.

### 3. ETHIOPIA

EAM visited Ethiopia from July 2-6, 2007 at the invitation of Foreign Minister of Ethiopia. Discussion focussed on bilateral, regional and global issues among the Foreign Offices and to establish a Joint Commission. The two sides also agreed to continue to cooperate against international terrorism including cross-border terrorism. They also agreed to sustain common position on climate change, UN reforms including the need for Africa to be represented as a Permanent Member in the expanded UNSC and how the process of integration is going to work in Africa including the move towards greater consolidation of regional economic groupings. Ethiopia reiterated its support for Permanent Membership of India in the expanded UNSC. EAM also met AU Chairperson Prof Alpha Oumar Konare. EAM inaugurated the pilot projects of Pan-African e-Network Project on tele-education, tele-medicine, which India will be implementing on an Africa wide basis. EAM also announced a Line of Credit of US \$ 122 million for the sugar sector of Africa.

The following agreements were signed:

- i) Agreement on the Establishment of India-Ethiopia Joint Ministerial Commission,
- ii) Protocol for Consultations between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia and the Ministry of External Affairs of India,
- iii) Agreement on Cooperation in the fields of Science and Technology,
- iv) Agreement for the Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investments,
- v) Exchange Programme in the Field of Education.

### 4. GERMANY

EAM visited Germany from May 28-31, 2007. He participated in the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Hamburg from July 28-29, 2007. ASEM dialogue addresses the political, economic and cultural issues with the objective of strengthening relationship between the two regions. EAM attended the India-EU Ministerial Troika meeting on May 31, 2007. The two sides exchanged views on strengthening of the India-EU strategic partnership, preparations for the India-EU Summit later this year in India and exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual interest.

Prime Minister visited Germany from June 6-8, 2007 to participate in G-8 + O5 Summit in Heiigendamm (Germany). The HOS/G of G-8 countries and O5 (Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa) discussed measures to cooperate in promoting cross border investments, promoting research and innovation, fighting climate change, obtain secure and affordable supplies of energy and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The HOS/G of Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa exchanged views on significant international issues, meeting challenges of globalizing and increasingly interdependent world, issues of global governance, international trade, bio fuels, migration and South-South Cooperation and follow-up action on above discussions.

## 5. INDONESIA

EAM visited Indonesia from June 17-18, 2007 for the India-Indonesia Joint Commission Meeting (JCM). Agreed Minutes of the JCM were signed by the Foreign Ministers of both countries. A MOU on Setting up a Vocational Training Centre at Aceh was signed by the Foreign Ministers of India and Indonesia. EAM called on the President, Vice President and Defence Minister of Indonesia during the visit.

## 6. JAPAN

EAM visited Japan on 22-23 March 2007. EAM and the Foreign Minister of Japan initiated the first Ministerial-level Strategic Dialogue between the two countries. They exchanged views on ways to enhance cooperation on regional, multilateral and global issues, and reiterated their readiness to cooperate in the process of community building in the Asian region. Both sides also discussed ways to strengthen bilateral relations through the implementation of understandings and agreements contained in the Joint Statement signed by the two Prime Ministers in December 2006. During the visit, the two sides agreed on the modalities for the High Level Energy Dialogue and the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism on High Technology Trade. Government is regularly monitoring progress on the implementation of understandings reached with Japan in the fields of defence and security, economic cooperation, science & technology & people-to-people exchanges.

## 7. LIBYA

EAM visited Libya from 26-28 May 2007 to Co-chair India-Libya Joint Commission Meeting. EAM met Col Gaddafi, Leader, Dr. Al-Baghdadi Ali al-Mahmudi, Secretary of the General People's Committee (Prime Minister), Mr. Abdel Rehaman Muhammed Shalgam, Foreign Minister, Minister of Economy, Trade and Investment, Minister for Manpower, Employment and Training, Minister for Cooperation, Minister for Culture and Information and Chairman, National Oil Corporation. He pushed the interest of Indian companies (public and private) in hydrocarbon, power generation and other infrastructure sectors and rejuvenated cooperation in investment, education, infrastructure, training, cooperation in Africa, high technology and energy sector.

Two agreements on Business Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPPA) and Cultural Agreement were signed during the visit.

## 8. PHILLIPINES

EAM visited Manila from July 30-August 2, 2007 to participate in East Asia Summit of Foreign Ministers, ASEAN Post Conference Ministerial meeting, Mekong Ganga Cooperation meeting and 14th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) meeting.

## 9. SINGAPORE

EAM visited Singapore from June 19-20, 2007. EAM called on the President, Prime Minister, Minister Mentor, Senior Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Singapore. During the visit, an MOU on the Establishment of Joint Ministerial Committee was signed. EAM inaugurated a CEOs Forum, the India Business Forum and a Track II Strategic Dialogue during the visit.