

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2033  
ANSWERED ON:16.03.2005  
ECONOMIC TIES WITH BANGLADESH  
Yadav Shri Ram Kripal

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

- (a) whether India and Bangladesh are discussing on some fresh trade, investments and economic issues;
- (b) if so, the details of projects and programmes on which discussions have been held so far; and
- (c) the outcome thereof?

**Answer**

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

(a), (b) & (c) Yes, Sir. India and Bangladesh have been discussing a number of fresh trade, investment and economic issues. The bilateral Joint Economic Commission (JEC), which met in Dhaka on 14-15 July 2003, focused on a host of economic and commercial proposals, including rail-borne container services, a new dollar denominated credit line, a bilateral investment protection and promotion agreement and a free trade agreement between the two countries.

As a follow up of the decisions taken during the JEC meeting, the India-Bangladesh Joint Working Group (JWG) on trade has met twice in October 2003 and in March 2004 for negotiations on a bilateral free trade agreement and the elimination of para-tariff and non-tariff barriers. The JWG has also finalised the text of a revised bilateral trade agreement, which is expected to be signed during the proposed visit of Hon`ble Minister of Commerce and Industry to Bangladesh sometime later this year. The India-Bangladesh Joint Group of Customs also met in New Delhi in March 2004 and addressed various field-level problems between the two sides. Indian and Bangladeshi officials met in Dhaka in August 2004 to discuss the terms and conditions of a new dollar denominated credit line to Bangladesh. They are expected to meet again in New Delhi in the near future to discuss and finalise a number of new projects in the railway sector that will be covered by the proposed credit line. In a related development, the inter-Governmental railway meeting between India and Bangladesh, which was held in New Delhi in December 2004, discussed several measures to strengthen relations between the two railways, including a new proposal for the movement of containerized cargo between the two countries.