

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5745  
ANSWERED ON:03.05.2000  
INDO-AUSTRALIAN TIES  
ANANDRAO ADSUL

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

- (a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned under `Bharat se behtar rishtaon ka ichhuk hai Australia` appearing in the Navbharat Times dated March, 24, 2000;
- (b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein; and
- (c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA)

(a) : Yes, Sir.

(b) : The Foreign Minister of Australia Mr. Alexander Downer had visited India during 21-24 March, 2000. Mr. Downer met the Hon`ble President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, and Commerce and Industry Minister. Various bilateral and multilateral issues were discussed.

(c) : The Foreign Minister of Australia had a comprehensive discussion on 23rd March, 2000. Both sides agreed that the countries relations would not be affected only with the Non-Proliferation issue and to restart the security relations being closed after the 1998 Pokhran Tests. Mr. Downer also discussed commerce and Industry issues with Murasoli Maran.