

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:565

ANSWERED ON:25.07.2001

INDO-AUSTRALIA TIES

ASHOK NAMDEORAO MOHOL;MAHBOOB ZAHEDI;P.R. KHUTE;RAMSHETH THAKUR;SUNIL KHAN

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether he had recently visited Australia;
- (b) if so, the issues discussed;
- (c) the outcome thereof; and
- (d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to boost Indo-Australia trade?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH)

(a) Yes, Sir, EAM visited Australia from 19th to 24th June 2001. This is the first ever stand alone visit by an Indian Minister of External Affairs to Australia.

(b) The chief objective of the visit was to hold the first India-Australia Ministerial Framework Dialogue with Foreign Minister Alexander Downer. During the visit, EAM discussed bilateral, regional, multilateral and international issues with Australian leaders.

(c) Both sides recognised that India and Australia are factors for stability in the region. In recognition of this, a Security Dialogue at senior Officials level comprising both civil and military personnel has been agreed to. The first Dialogue is scheduled to take place in Delhi later this year. It was also decided to boost our economic relations which offer great opportunities for trade and investment to both sides.

(d) The following steps were proposed to be taken to boost Indo-Australian trade:

(i) Both sides would encourage visits to each others countries by business delegations. Since India is deficient and Australia surplus, in energy resources, cooperation in the energy sector would be stepped up and finally cooperation in the Insurance, IT and Tourism sectors and promotion of Australian investments in basic infrastructure sectors of ports, mines etc. would be encouraged.