

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5020

ANSWERED ON:26.04.2000

INDO-FRENCH TIES

MADHAVRAO SCINDIA;PRABHAT KUMAR SAMANTARAY

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the French Foreign Minister visited India in February 2000;
- (b) if so, the details of talks held between the two countries;
- (c) the outcome thereof;
- (d) whether in March 2000 both the countries signed various agreements for closer bilateral relations;
- (e) if so, the details of such agreements;
- (f) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to implement them; and (g) the steps proposed to be taken to further improve the relations between the two countries?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA)

(a), (b) & (c) Yes, Sir. Mr. Hubert Vedrine, Foreign Minister of France, visited India on 17 & 18 February, 2000. The talks held during this visit reviewed bilateral relations as well as regional and multilateral developments. The visit contributed to better appreciation of our mutual interests, and enhanced appreciation by France of the implications of developments in India's neighborhood. The French Foreign Minister reiterated that India has a rightful place in any expanded UN Security Council. The two sides agreed to co-operate, bilaterally and in multilateral fora, to combat global terrorism.

(d), (e) & (f) Yes, Sir. India and France signed the bilateral Cultural Exchange Programme for the years 2000-02 on 10 March, 2000. The minutes of the 8th meeting of the Indo-French Joint Committee on Scientific & Technical Co-operation, which provides for various scientific and technical exchanges between the two countries over the next year, were also signed. The implementation of these agreements would involve exchange of information, joint projects in S&T, visits of cultural troupes, organisation of seminars & exhibitions etc.

(g) India will continue to work closely with France to ensure closer bilateral relations, including through high-level visits. The recently concluded visit of Rashtrapati ji to France, the first ever by an Indian Head of State to France, is an expression of this commitment.