

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:143
ANSWERED ON:24.07.2002
INDO AUSTRALIA TIES
ANANDRAO ADSUL

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Australia has sought to expand bilateral ties in the field of education, economy, environment and traditional sectors such as mining, etc.;
- (b) If so, the details thereof?
- (c) whether the Australian Foreign Minister who visited India recently had expressed interest in Indian mining;
- (d) If so, whether any agreements in this regard have been signed; and
- (e) If so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH)

(a) Yes, Sir. Both India and Australia are keen to expand bilateral ties in all fields including education, economy, environment and traditional sectors such as mining.

(b) This is evident from the recent exchange of high level visits between the two countries and the discussions that have taken place during the visits, including those of Prime Minister of Australia (July 2000), Foreign Minister of Australia (March 2000 and April 2002), External Affairs Minister of India (June 2001 & March 2002) and other ministerial delegations.

A number of institutional mechanisms have also been put in place that provide the framework for discussion and review of bilateral relations, such as the India-Australia Ministerial Framework Dialogue, Joint Ministerial Commission, Security Dialogue, Joint Working Group on Energy and Minerals etc. Agreements have also been signed for cooperation in sectors such as S&T, Air Transport, Tourism, Agriculture, Culture, and IT.

(c) Yes, Sir. During his visit to India in April 2002 for the 2nd India-Australia Ministerial Framework Dialogue, the Australian Foreign Minister expressed keen interest in cooperation in various fields including mining.

(d) & (e) While no agreement has been signed in the field of mining, there is a Joint Working Group on Energy and Minerals which meets regularly to discuss cooperation in this sector.