

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2482
ANSWERED ON:04.12.2002
INVITATION TO VISIT PAKISTAN
RAMDAS ATHAWALE

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether the Home Minister of Pakistan had recently invited his Indian counterpart to visit Islamabad; and
- (b) If so, the details thereof ?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) In March 2002, during the 2nd South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Information Minister's Conference held at Islamabad, the Pakistani media carried a report indicating that the Pakistani Interior Minister had extended an invitation to his Indian counterpart to visit Islamabad. There was also a suggestion in these reports that the Pakistani Interior Minister proposed discussions on the issue of de-escalation of tensions with India and on the list of 20 fugitives from law.

Pakistan leaders have frequently indulged in such propagandist ploys, especially during international conferences in their attempt to divert international attention from Pakistan's continued sponsorship and involvement with cross border terrorism in India. Pakistan also sought to divert attention from the fact that it had not taken any action on the list of 20 fugitives from law, handed over to them on 31st December 2001.

Government have consistently stated their commitment to establishing good neighbourly ties with Pakistan, and for this purpose to resume the Composite Dialogue that seeks to build trust and confidence, establish a stable structure of cooperation and address outstanding issues. Pakistan must end its sponsorship of cross border terrorism so that appropriate conditions for a meaningful dialogue process are created.