

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:22  
ANSWERED ON:03.12.2003  
VISIT OF FOREIGN DIGNITARIES/DELEGATIONS TO INDIA  
NIVEDITA MANE;RUPCHAND MURMU

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

- (a) Details of the foreign dignitaries/high level delegations who visited India since August, 2003;
- (b) The issues on which deliberations were held with each of them;
- (c) Whether any bilateral agreements were signed with them;
- (d) If so, the details thereof and the benefits likely to accrue by these agreements; and
- (e) The steps taken by the Government to strengthen the relations with these countries?

**Answer**

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

(a)-(e) : A statement is placed on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in parts (a) to (e) of Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 22 to be answered on 3.12.2003 regarding Visit of Foreign Dignitaries/Delegations to India.

Answer: Following foreign dignitaries/high level delegations visited India since August 2003:

Bangladesh:

(a) Ties with Bangladesh were strengthened through efforts by both sides to reactivate existing institutional mechanisms for cooperation in diverse areas of bilateral relations. The Bangladesh Minister of Water Resources visited India for the 35th meeting of the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission which was held on 28-29 September, 2003 after a gap of nearly three years. The entire range of issues in the water sector was discussed during the meeting.

(b) In connection with the visit of Bangladesh Minister of Water Resources, the entire range of issues in the water sector was discussed during the meeting. The Ministerial level Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) was also held on 28-29 September, 2003, after a gap of nearly three years.

(c) No agreement was signed during the visit of Bangladesh Minister of Water Resources.

(d) Does not apply.

(e) Ties with Bangladesh were strengthened through efforts by both sides to reactivate institutional mechanisms existing for cooperation in diverse areas of bilateral relations. In this context, the Ministerial level Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) held on September 28-29, 2003 after a gap of nearly three years was useful.

Maldives:

(a) (i) Mr. Ibrahim Hussain Zaki, Minister of Planning and National Development of Maldives visited India from 26 & 27 August 2003 as a Special Envoy of President Gayoom of Maldives to deliver a letter to Prime Minister. During his stay in India, Mr. Zaki met Minister of Health and Family Welfare and Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs, Shri Digvijay Singh. He also met Foreign Secretary.

(ii) Mr. Midhath Hilmy, Minister of Communication, Science and Technology of Maldives paid an official visit to India from 7-12 September 2003 at the invitation of Shri Arun Shourie, Minister of Communications and Information Technology.

(b) (i) The visit of Mr. Zaki, Minister of Planning and National Development of Maldives was in the context of India's support to Maldives UN fora.

(ii) Mr. Midhath Hilmy, Minister of Communication and Science Technology held discussions with Indian dignitaries on bilateral

cooperation in information technology. Mr. Hilmy visited places of interest in Information Technology (IT) sector in India.

(c) An MoU on cooperation in the field of Information Technology was signed during the visit of Mr. Midhath Hilmy, Minister of Communication and Science Technology. The MoU specifies cooperation in development of human resources in the IT Sector, IT education and formulation of legal instruments including cyber laws.

(d) Benefits out of the India-Maldives MoU on Information Technology will not only showcase our expertise in a sector in which we have a worldwide reputation but also help create a large reservoir of Maldivian IT experts with a friendly disposition towards India.

(e) Relations with Maldives were strengthened through high level dialogue and economic cooperation in diverse projects. To this end, India has committed to cooperate in new areas of information technology, tourism, agriculture and environment apart from strengthening cooperation in existing areas of health and education with Maldives.

Myanmar:

(a) The Deputy Foreign Minister of Myanmar Mr. Khin Maung Win visited India for Foreign Office Consultations from 23-25 October, 2003. During the consultations, the entire range of bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest were discussed. A Credit Agreement was signed during his visit making available a credit line of US\$25 million to the Govt. of Myanmar for import of Indian goods and services. This agreement will accelerate Indian exports to Myanmar.

(b) During the consultations between Deputy Foreign Minister and Foreign Secretary in the India-Myanmar Foreign Office Consultations, the entire range of bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest was discussed.

(c) A Credit Agreement was signed during visit of Deputy Foreign Minister making available a credit line of US\$25 million to the Government of Myanmar for import of Indian goods and services.

(d) The Credit Agreement signed during the visit of Deputy Foreign Minister will accelerate Indian exports to Myanmar.

(e) In order to strengthen relations, the Government is following a policy of constructive engagement with Myanmar and in recent months a number of high level exchanges have taken place including the visit of the Vice President of India to Myanmar from November 2-5, 2003, the first visit at such a high level in 16 years. A number of projects covering diverse sectors are also under various stages of consideration and implementation with Indian assistance.

Sri Lanka:

(a) (i) Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka visited India to deliver the Millennium Lecture 2003 of M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation at Chennai on 23 August 2003. The main theme of Sri Lankan Prime Minister's lecture "Making Our People Rich" dealt with closer economic integration amongst the South Asian countries.

(ii) The Sri Lankan Prime Minister made a working visit to India from 19-22 October 2003 as part of his efforts to seek India's and the international community's support for the peace process. The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka held wide-ranging discussions with Prime Minister of India, Deputy Prime Minister and Ministers of External Affairs, Commerce and Industry, Civil Aviation and Petroleum & Natural Gas called on Prime Minister Wickremesinghe.

(b) (i) The August visit of the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka was a private one and therefore there was no interaction with Indian Government representatives.

(ii) During the October 12-22, 2003 visit, his third official visit to India, the Sri Lankan Prime Minister's discussions with the Indian political leadership were substantive, held in a cordial atmosphere reflective of the close relations between the two countries. In response to Sri Lankan Prime Minister's request for India's support to the efforts of his Government on the peace process, a Joint Statement was issued. It reiterated GOI's commitment to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka and to the restoration of a lasting peace through a peaceful negotiated settlement that meets the just aspirations of all elements of Sri Lankan society.

(c) No.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) The steps taken by India to strengthen relations with Sri Lanka include high level political exchanges and deepening economic cooperation. India has a close political dialogue with Sri Lanka and is regularly briefed by the senior political leadership in Sri Lanka on developments in the peace process. The India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement has been successful in bringing bilateral trade to the US\$ 1 billion mark. Its success has prompted the two Governments to commence discussions on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

Bhutan:

(a) to (e) His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuck of the Kingdom of Bhutan paid a State visit to the Republic of India from September 14 to 18, 2003. During the visit, President and Vice-President held talks with the King, PM, DPM, EAM and Minister of Finance also held talks separately.

During the visit of His Majesty the King, Government of India agreed to an assistance package in respect of Indian contribution to

Bhutan's 9th Five Year Plan – 2002-2007. A Memorandum of Understanding for the preparation of a Detailed Project Report on the 900 MW Punatsangchu Hydroelectric Power Project in central Bhutan was also signed.

The opportunity of the visit was used for exchange of views on a wide range of issues of mutual interest and concern, including the presence of Indian insurgent groups in Bhutan, and the measures being undertaken by the Royal Government of Bhutan to persuade the militants to leave Bhutan's territory. Both sides agreed to continue working closely to resolve the issue. The two governments reiterated that as close friends and allies they will not allow their territories to be used by anyone for carrying out activities inimical to each other's national interests.

Nepal:

(a) H.E. Mr. Surya Bahadur Thapa, Prime Minister of Nepal from November 23-25, 2003.

(b) PM of Nepal visited India for consultation visit to SAARC Countries.

(c) No.

(d)&(e) Does not arise.

Iran:

(a) The following Iranian dignitaries leading high level delegations visited India since August 2003:

(i) H.E. Mr. Seyed Safdar Hosseini, Labour & Social Affairs Minister of Iran, 28-31 August 2003.

(ii) H.E. Mr. Ishaq Jahangiri, Minister of Industry & Mines, 1-5 November 2003.

(b) During these meetings, India and Iran discussed ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation. The Iranian Labour & Social Affairs Minister held discussions with Union Minister of Labour on the follow up on MoU on cooperation in Vocational Training signed between the two countries in January 2003.

Iranian Minister of Industry & Mines participated in the 19th World Mining Congress held at New Delhi from 1-5 November 2003 organized by Ministry of Mines. He also held discussions with Minister of State for Steel on the functioning of the MoU on supply of iron ore to Iran by Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Ltd.

(c) No. (d) Does not arise.

(e) India has been taking steps to expand and strengthen relations with Iran through regular high level political exchanges and security and strategic consultations. During the visit of President Mohammad Khatami of Iran to India from 24-28 January 2003, the two countries issued the New Delhi Declaration signed by Prime Minister and President Khatami. The Declaration puts forth the vision of strategic partnership between India and Iran for a more stable, secure and prosperous region and for enhanced regional and global cooperation. All aspects of bilateral cooperation identified by the New Delhi Declaration – bilateral economic cooperation, cooperation in the field of hydrocarbons, science and technology, information technology, education and training, India-Iran cooperation in reconstruction of Afghanistan, international terrorism, and other global issues, are under active follow up by the two sides.

China

(a to e) "During Prime Minister's visit to China in June 2003, the two sides agreed to each appoint a Special Representative to explore from the political perspective of the overall bilateral relationship the framework of a boundary settlement. Mr. Dai Bingguo, Executive Vice Foreign Minister visited India to hold the first meeting of the Special Representatives in New Delhi on October 23-24, 2003. The meeting was held in a cordial, constructive and cooperative atmosphere. Mr. Dai called on Prime Minister and External Affairs Minister.

Mr. Jia Qinglin, Chairman of National Committee of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference paid an official visit to India from November 23-27, 2003. This was his first visit abroad after taking over as the Chairman of CPPCC. His visit to India continues the process of high level exchanges with China, which was carried to a qualitatively new stage by the Prime Minister's recent visit. His visit contributed to the process of building up of mutual trust and understanding between the two countries and strengthened our parliamentary exchanges with China.

Mongolia

(a to e) The Defence Minister of Mongolia Mr. Jugderdemid Gurragchaa visited New Delhi on November 11, 2003 leading a delegation from the Ministry of Defence of Mongolia. He held discussions with Raksha Mantri. Minister of State for External Affairs called on him. The discussions covered bilateral relations including defence exchanges. No agreements were signed during the visit.

ROK

(a to e) The Chief Justice of the Republic of Korea Mr. Choi Jong Young visited India on November 2-5, 2003 at the invitation of Chief Justice of India. He held discussions with the Chief Justice of India and also called on the President and the Speaker of Lok Sabha.

No agreements were signed during the visit.

Algeria:

(a) Mr. Abddmalek Sellal, Minister of Transport led an official/business delegation to India from October 8-10, 2003

(b) Bilateral relations specially focussing on areas like political, economic and trade, science and technology were discussed during the visit.

(c) Agreements were signed for:

- 1) MoU on Cooperation in Small Scale Industry
- 2) Cultural Exchange Programme

3) Cooperation Agreement between PTI & ANS

(d) These Agreements would further increase our linkages with Algeria.

Djibouti:

(a) A 7-member Djibouti Defence delegation, led by Gen. Fathi Ahmed Hussein visited India from October 14-21, 2003

(b) Bilateral relations specially focussing on areas like political, economic and trade, science and technology were discussed during the visit.

Egypt:

(a) (i) A high level inter-Ministerial delegation from Egypt led by Dr. Hamdy Al Syed, Chairman of the Health Committee of People's Assembly (Parliament) visited India in August, 2003 to examine and report on the banned Meat exports to Egypt.

(ii) A Ministerial delegation led by Dr. Hassan Ali Khedr, Minister of Supply and Internal Trade and including Mr. Fayza Abou El-Naga, MOS for Foreign Affairs visited New Delhi in October, 2003. Mr. Khedr carried a letter from President Mubarak which was handed over to PM during a call on him.

(b) Bilateral relations specially focussing on areas like political, economic and trade, science and technology were discussed during the visits.

Israel:

(a) (i) Prime Minister of Israel Ariel Sharon paid a State visit to India from September 8-10, 2003. He was accompanied by Dy PM & Minister of Justice Yosef Lapid, Minister for Education, Culture & Sport Ms. Limor Livnat and Minister of Agriculture & Rural Development Yisrael Katz and a large group of Israeli businessmen.

(ii) Earlier Israeli Foreign Policy Advisor to PM Sharon visited India from August 11-15, 2003 to prepare for the above visit.

(b) Bilateral relations specially focussing on areas like political, economic and trade, science and technology were discussed during the visits.

(c)&(d) Agreements were signed for:

- 1) Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Protection of the Environment.
- 2) Agreement on Cooperation in the fields of Health and Medicine.
- 3) Agreement on Cooperation in combating illicit trafficking and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.
- 4) Agreement on Waiver of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic, service and official passports.
- 5) Exchange Programme on Cooperation in the field of Education
- 6) Exchange Programme on Culture Education.

(e) These Agreements would further increase our linkages with Israel.

Palestine:

(a) Foreign Minister of Palestine Nabil Shaath visited India from 29 August to September 1, 03.

(b) Bilateral relations specially focussing on areas like political, economic and trade, science and technology were discussed during the visit.

(c)&(d) Agreement was signed with Palestine during the high level visit for:

MoU on Cooperation between Foreign Service Institute

(e) This Agreement would further increase our linkages with Palestine.

Tunesia:

(a) Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia Madame SaidaChtioui visited India for bilateral consultations from October 13-16, 03.

(b) Bilateral relations specially focussing on areas like political, economic and trade, science and technology were discussed during the visit.

South Africa:

(a) President of South Africa accompanied by spouse, 12 Ministries and other senior officials visited India from 15th to 18th October, 2003.

(b) Strengthening bilateral cooperation on trade, economic and other matters of mutual interest.

(c) Yes.

(d) Following agreements were signed with South Africa:-

1. Agreement for cooperation in the field of Hydrocarbon Sector.

2. Mutual legal Assistance Treaty.

3. Extradition Treaty.

4. MoU for Cooperation. in the field of Power.

(e) Keeping in contact with these countries by way of exchange of high level visits, establishment of an institutional framework for bilateral cooperation, interaction in multilateral and UN fora.

Lesotho:

(a) Prime Minister of Lesotho accompanied by spouse, from Ministries & other senior officers visited India from 31-7-2003 to 8-8-2003.

(b) Strengthening bilateral cooperation on trade, economic and other matters of mutual interest.

(c) No.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Keeping in contact with these countries by way of exchange of high level visits, establishment of an institutional framework for bilateral cooperation, interaction in multilateral and UN fora.

Mauritius:

(a) His Excellency the Rt. Hon'ble Paul Raymond Beregnier, G.C.S.K., Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, accompanied by Lady Berenger, Paid a state visit to India from 18-24 November 2003 at the invitation of the Prime Minister of India.

(b) Deliberations were held on the issue of Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership

Agreement (CECPA) to strengthen and enhance economic, industrial trade and investment cooperation between the two countries, in the field of Defence and Security, in Hydrographic Surveys and Oil and Gas Exploration, Drug Trafficking and other Criminal Matters, Inauguration of Cyber tower, World Hindi Secretariat, International Convention center etc.

(c) Yes.

(d) Following Agreements were signed with Mauritius.

- 1) MOU on Cooperation in the field of Non-Conventional Energy Sources.
- 2) Treaty on Extradition
- 3) Agreement on World Hindi Secretariat
- 4) Agreement for purchase of one HAL-DO-228-201 aircraft for the Govt. of Mauritius.

(e) Keeping in contact with these countries by way exchange of high level visits, establishment of an institutional framework for bilateral cooperation, interaction in multilateral and UN fora.

Senegal:

(a) The President of Senegal, H.E. Mr. Abdoulaye Wade paid a state visit to India from October 12-16, 2003.

(a) Strengthening bilateral cooperation on trade, economic and other matters of mutual interest.

(a) Yes.

(b) The following agreements were signed during the state visit:-

- 5) Cultural Exchange Programme
- 6) Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion.
- 7) Bilateral Investment Promotion and protection agreement.
- 8) Cooperation in the field of Tourism
- 9) Protocol on cooperation between PTI and Senegal press agency.

(e) Keeping in contact with these countries by way exchange of high level visits, establishment of an institutional framework for bilateral cooperation, interaction in multilateral and UN fora.

Nigeria:

(a) The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Ambassador Oluyemi Adeniji accompanied by a delegation of officials from different ministries paid an official visit to New Delhi from 29th 31st of October, 2003 in connection with the Fourth India-Nigeria Joint Commission.

(b) The two Ministers Co-chaired the fourth session of the JCM exchanging views on multilateral and bilateral subjects.

(c) No.

(d) Does not arise..

(e) Keeping in contact with these countries by way of exchange of high level visits, establishment of institutional framework for bilateral cooperation, interaction in multilateral land UN fora.

Armenia:

(a) President of Armenia, Mr. Robert Kocharian from October 29-November 1, 2003

(b) Wide range of issues covering international, regional and bilateral questions

(c) Yes

(d) (i) Double Taxation Avoidance Convention. This will give sound legal basis to our economic and commercial ties in conjunction with BIPA signed earlier in the year.

(ii) Agreement on Exemption of Visa Requirement for Holders of Diplomatic Passports. This will facilitate travel for Diplomatic Passport holders.

(iii) MoU on Cooperation in Information Technology and Services. It will give a boost to cooperation in this area given the existing potential in both countries.

(e) Government attaches importance to further strengthening the warm and friendly ties with Armenia. A grant of US\$ 5 million was announced by the Prime Minister during the visit of the Armenian President to give a fillip to bilateral trade.

Romania:

I (a) Romanian Economy and Commerce Minister Mr. Dan Ioan Popescu, 20 October 2003.

(b) The 16th Session of the Indo-Romanian Joint Commission was held in New Delhi on 20 October 2003. The discussions focused on enhancing bilateral trade and economic cooperation by measures such as financial and banking arrangements and diversification of trade basket

(c) No

(d) NA

(e) Increasing trade and Industrial links, sustaining high-level bilateral visits, signing bilateral agreements for mutual benefit, encouraging liberal visa regimes, strengthening parliamentary linkages, encouraging joint ventures and research and development, increasing cultural contacts, providing technical and educational cooperation, maintaining Institutional links for all round development of bilateral relations such as Foreign Office Consultations, Joint Commissions, etc.

II. (a) Special Representative of the Government of Romania, Prince Radu, 16-22 November 2003.

(b) Expansion of bilateral relations in the fields of culture, commerce and trade was discussed.

(c) No

(d) NA

Czech Republic:

(a) Parliamentary Delegation of the Czech Republic led by Senator, Josef Jarab, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security Committee of the Czech Senate, 15-21 October 2003.

(b) Discussions with the Czech Parliamentary delegation were focussed on strengthening of parliamentary linkages, exchange of information regarding issues of national and international concerns, increase of trade and commerce and expansion of cultural links.

(c) No

(d) NA

Hungary:

(a) Prime Minister of Hungary H. E. Mr. Peter Medgyessy paid a State Visit to India from 2-8 November 2003

(b) Talks covered a wide range of bilateral, regional and international issues. Business interaction was another prominent component of the visit.

(c) Yes

(d) Seven documents signed during the visit include:

(i) Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement,

(ii) Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement,

(iii) Agreement on Defence Cooperation,

(iv) Agreement on Exemption of Visa Requirement for Diplomatic and Official Passport Holders,

(v) Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Information Technology and Services,

(vi) Cultural Exchange Programme and

(vii) Educational Exchange Programme

In addition, EXIM Banks of the two countries signed an Agreement of Cooperation and two other documents extending a Line of Credit of US\$ 10 million for exports from each other country.

The thrust of these documents is to reinforce the legal framework for enhancing bilateral trade and investment and also cooperation in key areas for mutual benefit, such as defence, culture and education.

(e) Efforts are being made to promote trade and economic cooperation between the two countries. Existing institutional mechanisms between the two sides like Joint Commission, Foreign Office Consultations etc. are being actively used. Foreign Office Consultations were held in Budapest in July 2003 and the 11th Session of the Joint Commission was held in Budapest in October 2003. The Indian delegation was headed by Minister of Commerce and Industry Shri Arun Jaitley. As part of the effort to maintain regular high-level interaction, Minister of State for External Affairs Shri Digvijay Singh held bilateral meeting with his counterpart during his visit to Budapest in mid-July 2003 for chairing the second Conference of India's Heads of Missions to Central and Eastern European countries.

Serbia and Montenegro:

I (a) Foreign Minister of Serbia and Montenegro H. E. Mr. Goran Svilanovic paid an official visit to India from 20-22 October 2003

(b) Bilateral issues in political, economic and cultural spheres were discussed. Views were exchanged on international issues of mutual interest.

(c) No

(d) N.A.

(e) Efforts are being made to further strengthen our long-standing and close relations with Serbia and Montenegro (formerly Federal republic of Yugoslavia). For promoting bilateral trade and investment, a Joint Business Council has been established during the visit of Mr. Svilanovic. Steps have been taken to maintain regular high level interaction between Foreign Offices and other concerned Ministries of the two countries.

II (a) Ms. Pave Zupan Ruskovic, Minister of Tourism, visited India from 27 to 30 September 2003

(b) Bilateral cooperation in the field of tourism was discussed. Ms. Ruskovic visited 'India Travel & Tourism Mart'.

(c) No

(d) N.A.

(e) Steps such as holding regular interaction at the level of Ministers and senior officials and promoting the exchange of bilateral trade delegations have been undertaken for steadily expanding relations in all areas. President of Croatia had paid a state visit to India in November 2003.

Ukrain:



(a) Foreign Minister of Ukraine Mr. Anatoly Zlenko

(b) Wide range of bilateral issues and international matters

(c) Yes

(d) (i) Agreement on Cooperation in Tourism. This is aimed at promoting tourism between the two countries.

(ii) Agreement on Mutual Protection of Classified Information. It will facilitate exchange of information on crucial issues of bilateral interest by ensuring the protection of information exchanged.

(e) Government attaches importance to strengthening India's multi-faceted cooperation with Ukraine. Besides the visit of Ukrainian Foreign Minister to India in August 2003, Raksha Mantri visited Ukraine from 17-19 October 2003 and held useful discussions with senior Ukrainian dignitaries. Foreign Office Consultations were held in New Delhi in April 2003 and the 3rd session of the Indo-Ukrainian Inter-Governmental Commission was held in Kyiv in July 2003. A business delegation visited Ukraine in September 2003, under the auspices of the Confederation of Indian Industry. A high-level Ukrainian Parliamentary delegation, headed by their Speaker is scheduled to visit India in the first week of December 2003.

Kyrgyzstan:

a) The President of Kyrgyzstan Mr. Askar Akaev visited India on 10-11 November 2003 in connection with the UNESCO-sponsored "Education for All" conference. The Kyrgyz Minister for Foreign Trade and Industry Mr. S.M. Djienbekov visited India from 4-6 November 2003 in connection with the 3rd Session of the Indo-Kyrgyz Joint Commission meeting in New Delhi.

b) During his visit to attend the "Education for All" Conference, the President of Kyrgyzstan also met the President and the Prime Minister of India. Indo-Kyrgyz bilateral relations and issues of regional and international interest were also discussed.

c&d) No agreement was signed during the Kyrgyz President's visit. But at the conclusion of the Joint Commission meeting, a Protocol was signed.

e) India and Kyrgyzstan have close bilateral relations. From 4-6 November 2003, the 3rd Indo-Kyrgyz Joint Commission meeting was held in New Delhi and the discussions included identification of new areas of cooperation. At the request of the Kyrgyz Government, India has agreed to restructure the outstanding amount on the credit line of US\$ 5 mn. extended to Kyrgyzstan. Ten four-wheel drive TATA Safari Jeeps were gifted to Kyrgyzstan in 2002. India proposes to establish an IT centre and a potato chips plant in Kyrgyzstan. In addition, India provides annually 50 training slots to the Kyrgyz nationals under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation [ITEC]. Industrial and consumer goods exhibitions from India have also been held in Kyrgyzstan over the last two years.

Switzerland:

(a) Swiss President Mr. Pascal Couchepin from 6-12 November, 2003

(b) He met Rashtrapati, PMEAM and Minister of Human Resource Development. Discussions focused on bilateral regional and on international issues .

(c)&(d) Agreements on cooperation on Disaster Management and on cooperation in Science and Technology

(e) Both the Agreements define the detailed procedures for cooperation between the two countries.

U.K.

I(a) A 10-member Conservative Parliamentary Friends of India (CPFIND) delegation from the UK, led by its Chairman Mr. Peter Luff, MP, visited India from 23 September – 3 October 2003

(b) The delegation had an extensive and multi-faceted programme which included visits to Mumbai, New Delhi, Jammu, Srinagar and Agra.

2(a) The Prince of Wales, Prince Charles, visited India at the invitation of Vice-President from 28th October-5th November 2003

(b) The Prince called on Rashtrapati. Vice-President hosted a banquet in honour of the Prince. He also briefly met Prime Minister. The Prince of Wales also visited Haryana, Rajasthan and Mumbai

(c) Nil

(d) N.A.

(e) The India-UK bilateral relationship has been enriched by the intensification of economic co-operation. Several initiatives adopted in the last couple of years seek to make the relationship future oriented by increasing co-operation in promising areas such as IT technology and other knowledge based sectors. Recent years have also seen an increase in political interaction at the highest levels. There have also been regular meetings of institutionalised mechanisms for dialogue and bilateral co-operation.

Canada:

I (a) Mr. Bill Graham, Foreign Minister of Canada, October 11-14, 2003

(b) Bilateral issues including trade, cultural exchange, supply of no-lethal defence equipment, and international issues including nuclear proliferation, disarmament, Indo-Pak relations, cross border terrorism, Iran, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka

(c) An MOU between the Indian Foreign Service Institute and the Canadian Foreign Service Institute was signed.

(d) The MOU provided for exchange of information on the structure and content of diplomatic training programmes and for providing training to employees both at headquarters and at missions. It also provided for designing of e-learning course contents and joint research in mutually agreed areas. This will help India to benefit from the Canadian experts in these fields and will help in understanding each other's system.

(e) Promoting better mutual understanding through regular dialogue and increasing commercial and economic interaction between the two countries.

II (a) Mr. Jeen Chretien, Prime Minister of Canada from October 24-25, 2003.

Bilateral trade, fight against terrorism, UN reforms, situation in Iraq, Afghanistan, Zimbabwe, G-8 meeting

(b) No.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Does not arise.

Guyana:

(a) H.E. Mr. Bharrat Jagdeo, President of the Republic of Guyana from August 24-28, 2003.

(b) Deliberations were held on various bilateral , regional and international issues of mutual interest and concern.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The following agreements were signed during the visit:-

a. Cultural Exchange Programme between India and Guyana.

b. Agreement on Education Exchange Programme between India and Guyana.

c. Agreement on waiver of outstanding loan of first line of credit extended to Guyana by India.

These Agreements are aimed at providing Indian expertise to developing countries in the region in areas identified for cooperation in these agreements with a view to strengthening South-South Cooperation and in return to benefit from the individual strengths and levels of skills and excellence in areas where India lags behind in expertise or technology.

(e) Steps taken by the Government to strengthen relations with Guyana are:-

1. Promotion of high level bilateral visits.

2. Encouraging exchange of business delegations and participation in exhibitions, buyer-seller meets and specialized trade fairs.

3. Exchange of cultural troupes and holding of Festivals of India.

4. Maintaining of regular contacts and deliberations through institutional mechanism such as Joint Commission, Foreign Office consultation, Joint Business Councils, etc.

5. Coordination of positions on important issues of concern to India in the multilateral forum.

Brazil:

(a) H.E. Mr. Celso Amorim, Minister of External Relations of the Federative Republic of Brazil to India from October 20-22, 2003.

(b) Deliberations were held on various bilateral , regional and international issues of mutual interest and concern.

Cuba:

(a) H.E. Mrs. Martha Lomas Morales, Minister of the Republic of Cuba from November 24-26, 2003.

(b) Deliberations were held on various bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest and concern.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) An Agreement on Work Plan on Agricultural Cooperation between India and Cuba was signed.

This Agreement is aimed at providing Indian expertise to developing countries in the region in areas identified for cooperation in these agreements with a view to strengthening South-South Cooperation and in return to benefit from the individual strengths and levels of skills and excellence in areas where India lags behind in expertise or technology.

(e) Steps taken by the Government to strengthen relations with Cuba are:-

1. Promotion of high level bilateral visits.
2. Encouraging exchange of business delegations and participation in exhibitions, buyer-seller meets and specialized trade fairs.
3. Exchange of cultural troupes and holding of Festivals of India.
4. Maintaining of regular contacts and deliberations through institutional mechanism such as Joint Commission, Foreign Office consultation, Joint Business Councils, etc.
5. Coordination of positions on important issues of concern to India in the multilateral forum.

Caribbean Community:

(a) Visit of CARICOM (Caribbean Community) delegation headed by H.E. Mr. K.D. Knight, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Jamaica and Chairperson of the Council of Community Ministers from November 25-30, 2003.

(b) Deliberations were held on various bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest and concern.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The following agreement was signed during the visit:-

Agreement to establish "a standing joint commission on consultation and coordination" between the Caribbean Community and India.

The Agreement is aimed at providing Indian expertise to developing countries in the region in areas identified for cooperation in these agreements with a view to strengthening South-South Cooperation and in return to benefit from the individual strengths and levels of skills and excellence in areas where India lags behind in expertise or technology.

(e) Steps taken by the Government to strengthen relations with these countries are:-

1. Promotion of high level bilateral visits.
2. Encouraging exchange of business delegations and participation in exhibitions, buyer-seller meets and specialized trade fairs.
3. Exchange of cultural troupes and holding of Festivals of India.
4. Maintaining of regular contacts and deliberations through institutional mechanism such as Joint Commission, Foreign Office consultation, Joint Business Councils, etc.
5. Coordination of positions on important issues of concern to India in the multilateral forum.

SAARC:

(a) The following foreign dignitaries and high level foreign delegations visited India to participate in the Third meeting of the SAARC Information Ministers at New Delhi from 10 - 12 November 2003 and; the First SAARC Health Ministers Conference at New Delhi from 13 - 15 November 2003.

Third SAARC Information Ministers Meeting, New Delhi 10 - 12 November 2003

Country/Delegation Organisation

Bangladesh His Excellency Mr. Tariqul Islam, Minister of Information

Bhutan His Excellency Mr. Lyompo Leki Dorji, Minister of Information and Communication

Nepal His Excellency Mr. Kamal Thapa, Minister for Information and Communication

Pakistan His Excellency Mr. Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, Minister for Information and Broadcasting

Maldives Mr. Ahmed Zaki Nafiz, Assistant Director General Ministry of Information, Arts & Culture.

Sri Lanka Mr. Mangala Moonesinghe Sri Lanka's High commissioner to India represented Sri Lanka in this meeting.

SAARC Secretariat Mr. Q A M A Rahim, Secretary General of SAARC

First SAARC Health Ministers Conference, New Delhi 13 - 15 November 2003

Country/Delegation Organisation

Pakistan His Excellency Mr. Mohammed Nasir Khan, Federal Minister of Health

Nepal His Excellency Mr. Kamal Thapa, Minister for Health

Sri Lanka His Excellency Mr. Wijewantha, Provincial Minister of Health, Southern Province

Bhutan His Excellency Mr. Lyonpo Jigmi Singay, Minister of Health

Bangladesh Mr. Md. Shahadat Hossain, Acting High Commissioner, Bangladesh High Commission, New Delhi

Maldives Ms. Aminath Rasheeda, Assistant Executive Director, Department of Public Health

SAARC Secretariat Mr. Q A M A Rahim, Secretary General of SAARC

- (b) These delegations were in Delhi to attend the concerned SAARC Ministerial Meetings.
- (c) No bilateral agreements were signed during these meetings.
- (d) Does not arise.
- (e) India remains committed to the SAARC process and it has shouldered a major share of responsibility for SAARC activities and has vigorously promoted trade and other forms of economic, social, and technical cooperation within SAARC. India also actively supports people to people initiatives aimed

at fostering greater mutual understanding and goodwill in the region.

ASEAN:

(a) Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) jointly organized 2nd India-ASEAN Business Summit on 4-6 August, 2003 in Delhi and Mumbai. Following Dignitaries visited India for the Business Summit.

1. H.E. Mr. Ong Keng Yong, Secretary General of ASEAN
2. H.E. Dato Seri S. Samy Vellu, Minister of Works, Government of Malaysia.
3. H.E. Dato Seri Mohammed Nazri Abdul Aziz, Minister of Entrepreneurial Development, Government of Malaysia.
4. H.E. Datuk Seri haji Mohd. Ali Bin Mohad., Rustan, Chief Minister of the State of Melaka, Government of Malaysia.
5. H.E. Brig. Gen. Pyi sone, Minister of Commerce, Government of Myanmar.
6. H.E. Dr. Vivian Balakrishnana, Minister of State for Trade & Industry, government of Singapore.

(b) The deliberations centered on augmenting the private sector linkages further between India and ASEAN member countries.

(c) No Sir.

(d) Doest not arise.

(e) As part of "Look East" policy, India has launched various initiatives to develop a multi-faceted relationship with ASEAN member countries. At the 2nd India-ASEAN summit held in Bali, Indonesia on October 8, 2003, India signed a Framework Agreement for Comprehensive Economic Cooperation with ASEAN. India and ASEAN also adopted a Joint Declaration on Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism and India acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation as a non-Member.

