

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:314

ANSWERED ON:03.12.2003

FOREIGN VISITS BY PM

BHASKAR RAO PATIL;CHANDRA NATH SINGH;GADDE RAMAMOCHAN;M.V.V.S MURTHI;NIVEDITA MANE;PADAMSEN
CHAUDHARY;PUTTASWAMY GOWDA;SHYAMA SINGH;T. GOVINDAN

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) The names of countries visited by our PM during the last six months and till date;
- (b) The details of the issue discussed with each of these countries;
- (c) The details of the agreements signed and the outcome thereof;
- (d) The names of countries that have decided to set up joint working group on counter terrorism with India: and
- (e) The benefits likely to be obtained by such a decision?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN 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) – (e) of Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 314 to be answered on 03.12.2003 regarding Foreign Visits by PM.

The names of countries visited by our PM during the last six months are:-

Germany, Russian Federation (St. Petersburg) and France (Evian) - May 27- June 3, 2003;

People's Republic of China - June 22 - 27, 2003.

Turkey and USA (New York for only UNGA) - September 16-28, 2003;

Indonesia (For ASEAN Summit) and Thailand - October 5-12, 2003;

Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Syria - November 11-16, 2003

(b, c, d & e)

Germany and France:

PM visited Germany, St. Petersburg and Evian from 27th May – 3rd June 2003. No agreements were signed during the visits. The discussions focused on review of bilateral relations and exchange of views on regional and global issues of mutual concerns. In Germany, there was emphasis on enhancing bilateral trade and investment linkages with greater scientific and technological cooperation. In a meeting with French President Chirac on 30th May there was emphasis on bilateral cooperation in the energy sector. British Prime Minister Tony Blair in a meeting on 31st May demonstrated sensitivity and understanding for India's core security concerns. In meetings with Mexican President Vicente Fox and the Brazilian President Mr. Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in Evian on 2nd June there was common understanding and need for developing strategic alliance on WTO issues, reviving the G15 and strengthening the UN so as to effectively articulate developing countries' concerns.

2. There was no proposal for setting up of Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism with India.

Russian Federation:

PM visited the Russian Federation from 29 May-1 June 2003 at the invitation of the President of the Russian Federation H. E. Mr. Vladimir Putin to attend the Tercentenary Celebrations of the city of St. Petersburg, and the Russian Federation from 11-13 November 2003 for holding the bilateral annual Summit with the Russian President.

2. In his meetings with the President of the Russian Federation during both these visits, Hon'ble Prime Minister discussed a wide range of bilateral issues, including measures to enhance bilateral trade and investment and cooperation in defence, science and technology, defence, space and culture. The two leaders also exchanged views on important regional and international issues such as the role of the UN, global challenges like international terrorism, organised crime, etc.

3. Documents signed during the visit of Hon'ble Prime Minister to the Russian Federation from 11-13 November 2003, with their details are:

i. Declaration of the Republic of India and the Russian Federation on Global Challenges and Threats to World Security and Stability is a major political document and outlines the main challenges and threats in the contemporary world and sets out the framework for the cooperation of India and Russia for addressing them. It enumerates international terrorism, promotion of multilateralism and developmental and environmental challenges as the issues high on agenda in this regard, and recognises the developing Indo-Russian strategic partnership as a crucial factor for world security and stability. The Declaration was signed by Hon'ble Prime Minister and the President of the Russian Federation.

ii. Agreement between the Government of the State of Andhra Pradesh of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Tatarstan of the Russian Federation on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation:- The Agreement was proposed by the Russian side. The Agreement will add one more chapter to the growing cooperation between regions of the Russian Federation and states of India. It will enable the Republic of Tatarstan, an important constituent of Russia industrially and culturally and Andhra Pradesh, a fast growing state of India with a rich cultural heritage, to cooperate in mutually beneficial areas. From the Indian side, External Affairs Minister and from the side of the Republic of Tatarstan, its Prime Minister signed the Agreement.

Agreement on Scientific Cooperation and Scientific Exchange between the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) and the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) seeks to promote their cooperation through exchange of scientific information and publications and other scientific material, exchange of scientists for research visits and for exchange of scientific knowledge, organising bilateral workshop, etc. This is envisaged to be achieved through promotion of direct contacts between research teams, with the help of inter-institution agreements. The Agreement was signed from the Indian side by Secretary Department of Science and Technology and from the Russian side, by the President of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

v. Memorandum of Understanding between Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Russian Aviation and Space Agency (Rosavikosmos) on Cooperation in Exploration and Use of Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes The proposed MoU between ISRO and Rosaviakosmos (RSA) charts out the course of future cooperation between these two agencies in the field of peaceful use of space. It encompasses cooperation in important areas such as India's lunar mission, use of tracking facilities, mission analysis, cooperation in advanced propulsion systems, cooperation in electric propulsion system for satellite operations, development of synthetic aperture radar satellite missions for remote sensing of the earth's natural resources. The MoU was signed from the Indian side by secretary Department of Space and Chairman of Indian space Research Organisation (ISRO) Prof. G. Madhavan Nair, and from the Russian side by the Chairman of Rosaviakosmos.

vi. Protocol on Scientific Cooperation between the Department of science and Technology of the Government of the Republic of India and the Russian Academy of Sciences seeks to reinforce the ongoing fruitful cooperation between these agencies in diverse areas, including high-technology. The Protocol was signed from the Indian and the Russian sides, respectively, by Secretary Department of Science and Technology and the President of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

vii. Protocol between the Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on Joint Publication of Bilateral Archive (Diplomatic) Documents is in pursuance to the understanding reached at the last Summit (December 2002), which was mentioned in the Joint Statement as well. Joint publication of Indo-Russian documents will be an effective to create an important reference source for important bilateral documents and will also showcase the dynamic development of multifaceted Indo-Russian strategic partnership. The Protocol was signed by EAM and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

vii. Report on the Implementation of Steps Enunciated in the Joint Declaration on Strengthening and Enhancing Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation signed during the Visit of President of the Russian Federation H. E. Mr. Vladimir Putin to India in December 2002 This is in accordance with Para 20 of this Declaration, a report needs to be submitted to the leaders of the two countries before their next Summit (the forthcoming Summit) on the measures taken and progress achieved in implementing the provisions and road map envisioned in the Declaration for development of Indo-Russian cooperation in economic, scientific and technological sectors. At present, the text of the Report is close to being finalised in consultations with the Russian side. The Report was signed by Foreign Secretary, as Co-Vice Chairman of the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission (IRIGC), and his Russian counterpart Mr. Mikhail Dmitriyev.

Viii Memorandum of Understanding between Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC) of India Ltd. and Vneshtorgbank (VTB) – seeks to strengthen interbanking cooperation, which is vital for enhanced trade and investment and was signed by the Chairmen of the two Banks. Beside these documents, a Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of science and Technology of

the Government of the Republic of India and the Russian Academy of Science for Establishment of Indo-Russian Centre for Gas Hydrates Studies and another Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of science and Technology of the Government of the Republic of India and the Russian Academy of Science Establishment of Indo-Russian Centre for Earthquake Research were also signed from the Indian and the Russian sides, respectively, by Secretary Department of Science and Technology and the President of the Russian Academy of Sciences. These MoU are pursuant to the ongoing implementation of Integrated Long term Plan for cooperation in the sphere of science and technology between India and Russia. The establishment of the proposed joint science centres on study of gas hydrates and seismology in India will further strengthen our bilateral cooperation in technologies which have important applications.

4. Indo-Russian Joint Working Group on Combating International Terrorism already exists. It was set up under the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism, signed during the visit of President Putin to India in December 2002 and held its first meeting in Moscow on 29-30 September 2003.

5. The existing Indo-Russian Joint working Group on Combating International Terrorism has contributed to further strengthen close cooperation between India and the Russian Federation in this regard, both bilaterally and in multilateral fora. This is sought to be done with the help of regular consultations and interaction between concerned agencies of the two countries, exchange of information and sharing of experience in dealing with international terrorism and related phenomena including illicit drug and arms trafficking, organised crime, etc. The Joint Working Group has also reconfirmed the close identity of views India and Russia have on dealing with the threat posed by international terrorism, including their common stand on the need for the international community to fight terrorism everywhere and in every form, in a concerted and sustained manner.

China:

"At the invitation of the Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China (PRC), Mr. Wen Jiabao, Prime Minister paid an official visit to the PRC from June 22 to 27, 2003. He was accompanied by a high-level delegation, including External Affairs Minister, Minister of Commerce and Industry (in Beijing), Minister of Communications, Information Technology and Disinvestment (in Shanghai), and the National Security Adviser. The business delegation accompanying PM on this visit was one of the largest of all his visits abroad.

2. In Beijing, PM held talks with Premier Wen Jiabao and had separate meetings with President Hu Jintao, Chairman Jiang Zemin of the Central Military Commission, Chairman Wu Bangguo of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and Vice President Zeng Qinghong. He also interacted with the provincial leaders of Henan Province at Luoyang and Shanghai. These meetings with the top leadership of the PRC were both cordial and fruitful.

3. Ten agreements and a Joint Declaration on Principles for Relations and Comprehensive Cooperation between India and China were concluded on June 23. The agreements, which reaffirmed the desire and efforts of the two countries to diversify bilateral cooperation into new areas, are the following:

- i. MOU on Simplifying Visa Procedures;
- ii MOU on Expanding Border Trade through Nathula Pass;
- iii MOU on Cooperation between the Ministry of Law and Justice of India and the Supreme People's Prosecution Service of China;
- iv. Executive Programme for Educational Cooperation and Exchanges (2003-06);
- v. Executive Programme for Cultural Exchanges (2003-05);
- vi. MOU for the Reciprocal Establishment of Cultural Centres in Capitals;
- vii. MOU for Enhanced Cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy;
- viii. MOU for Cooperation in the field of Ocean Science and Technology;
- ix. MOU for Cooperation between the Department of Science and Technology of India and the National Science Foundation of China; and
- x Protocol on Phytosanitary Requirements for Exporting Mangoes from India to China

4. The twin objectives of Prime Minister's visit were to establish close relations with the new leadership of China and to impart fresh momentum to the ongoing cooperation between our two countries, which has been diversifying. These objectives were fulfilled and as Prime Minister said, the journey ahead is long but a good beginning has been made. All of Prime Minister's interlocutors underlined that his visit had opened a new chapter in India-China relations.

5. During the visit of Prime Minister to China, the two sides exchanged views on the India-China boundary question and expounded their respective positions. They reiterated their readiness to seek a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution through consultations on an equal footing. The two sides agreed that pending an ultimate solution, they should work together to maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas, and reiterated their commitment to continue implementation of the agreements signed for this purpose, including the clarification of the Line of Actual Control.

6. 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. The National Security Adviser has been appointed the Special Representative from the Indian side while Mr. Dai Bingguo, the senior-most Vice Foreign Minister, will be the Special Representative from the Chinese side. The appointment of Special Representatives will not, however, supplant the existing mechanisms of the Joint Working Group and Expert Group, which will continue the joint work on the clarification of the Line of Actual Control and Confidence Building Measures, among other things

7. Government remains concerned at certain aspects of the China-Pakistan relationship, which adversely affect our security. This includes Sino-Pak defence cooperation including in the nuclear weapons and missile development programme. We have made known our concerns to the Chinese side from time to time.

8. The main focus of discussions during Prime Minister's visit to China was on bilateral issues.

Agreement to establish the India-China Dialogue Mechanism on Counter Terrorism was reached between the two Prime Ministers during the visit of Premier Zhu Rongji to India in January 2002. During the visit of the External Affairs Minister to China in March 2002 it was agreed that the dialogue would be held annually, with the first meeting in New Delhi in April 2002. The first meeting of the India-China Dialogue Mechanism on Counter Terrorism was held in New Delhi on 23rd April, 2002. The second round of dialogue was held on June 13, 2003 in Beijing. Both sides shared their national experiences on dealing with the phenomenon of terrorism, and exchanged views on the international counter terrorism situation including developments in the region, cooperation at the United Nations and possibilities of bilateral cooperation.

10. Government of India is committed to the development of friendly and good neighbourly relations with China on the basis of the principles of Panchsheel, mutual sensitivity to each other's concerns and equality."

USA (UN General Assembly Meeting):

Prime Minister led the Indian delegation to the 58th Session of the UN General Assembly in New York in September 2003. He addressed the General Assembly on September 25, 2003. Prime Minister held bilateral meetings with ten leaders at the Head of State/Government level (He met the Presidents of Russia, USA, Afghanistan, Nigeria and Zimbabwe and Prime Ministers of Sri Lanka, Mauritius and Portugal.). He had informal meetings with the Presidents of Brazil and South Africa as part of the India-Brazil-South Africa trilateral dialogue forum.

2. International issues including the situation in Iraq, Middle-East, Afghanistan etc. were discussed in the meetings.

3. During his visit to New York for the UNGA in September 2003, Prime Minister met U.S. President George W. Bush.

4. The two leaders reviewed India-U.S. bilateral relations and exchanged views on international developments of mutual interest.

5. No agreement was signed during the meeting.

6. India has Joint Working Groups on Counter-terrorism with Canada and the United States.

7. These Joint Working Groups have led to better understanding in Canada and the United States of India's concerns on terrorism and has also strengthened mutually beneficial counter-terrorism cooperation, including in the areas of capacity building, training, intelligence sharing and investigative cooperation.

Thailand:

PM visited Thailand from October 8-12, 2003 and the details of issues discussed are :

Bilateral issues:

to enhance bilateral cooperation in all areas, to give full support to private sector enterprises to establish joint ventures in promising areas such as autoparts, food processing, construction, IT and fisheries, security cooperation, to join efforts with us in combating terrorism., closer coordination and sharing of intelligence under the existing Joint Working Group on Security Cooperation, to facilitate bilateral commercial interaction by liberalizing the visa regime for business travelers, to establish twinning arrangements between Port Blair and Phuket in Thailand to develop Port Blair as a tourist destination and to assist Thailand in its plans to develop Phuket as an IT city, and to set up cultural centers in each other's countries to reinvigorate our age-old cultural ties increased air services to the four metropolitan cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai and reciprocal Indian flights to Bangkok and other cities,

Regional issues:

Thailand's to coordinate with us in preparing an ASEAN-India Vision 2020 document mapping out a long term strategy of cooperation,

1. to intensify cooperation within the framework of BIMST-EC (Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand – Economic Cooperation).

to push for early progress on trilateral transportation projects between India, Myanmar and Thailand for which we have offered to host a Ministerial meeting on this in December 2003,

3. to continue working closely after the collapse of WTO meeting in Cancun. Five bilateral Agreements were signed in the presence of the two Prime Ministers:

- (i) Framework Agreement for Establishing a Free Trade Area;
- (ii) Agreement for Exemption of Visas for holders of Diplomatic and Official Passports;
- (iii) MoU on Cooperation in the field of Agricultural Science, Technology and Economy;
- (iv) Agreement on Tourism Cooperation; and
- (v) Programme of Cooperation in Biotechnology.

Outcome:

(i) Framework Agreement for Establishing a Free Trade Area: The framework Agreement for Establishing a Free Trade Area (FTA), the first that India has signed with an ASEAN country, is an important milestone between the two countries. The FTA will come into force in March 2004 with an Early Harvest Package of 84 items and is expected to double bilateral trade from the current US\$1.2 billion by next year.

(ii) Agreement for Exemption of Visas for holders of Diplomatic and Official Passports: The signing of the Agreement for Exemption of Visas for holders of Diplomatic and Official Passports would facilitate the the visit of officials from both the sides.

(iii) MOU on Cooperation in the field of Agricultural Science, Technology and Economy: The MoU on Cooperation in the field of Agricultural Science, Technology and Economy promotes bilateral cooperation in the field of agriculture through joint activities and exchanges in the areas of agricultural and forestry research; post harvest technology; plant biotechnology; soil and water conservation and watershed management; soil survey and land use planning; agro-forestry and farming systems; crop production and processing; sericulture; horticulture; livestock production and health; seed storage and packing; farm mechanization development and extension; promotion of joint ventures in agri business; irrigation and drainage, etc.

(iv) Agreement on Tourism Cooperation: The Agreement on Tourism Cooperation shall facilitate both countries to set up a Representative Office for Tourism in the other country. Both countries shall encourage their respective designated authority to coordinate in tourism activities in accordance with the rules and regulations in force in each country by exchanging information, expertise and experience regarding inventory of tourism resources, prevalent legislation and regulations on tourism activities and measures for preservation as well as sustainable development of both natural and cultural tourism resources and also encourage the exchange of expertise regarding the organisation, management and operation of tourism business, and shall assist each other in training their staffs in the field of tourism. They shall also consider exchange of curriculum and methodology on tourism teaching, studies and research.

(v) Programme of Cooperation in Biotechnology: The signing of the Programme of Cooperation between the two sides facilitates to promote, develop and facilitate co-operative activities in the field Biotechnology on the basis of common interest and mutual benefit.

The following countries have decided to set up joint working group on counter terrorism with India:-

Thailand (The Joint Working Group on Security with Thailand addresses, inter-alia, the problem of terrorism)

- b) Singapore has set up a Joint Working Group on Terrorism with India
- c) Australia (There is an India -Australia Joint Working Group on Terrorism)

Such Joint Working Groups would address the problem of combating terrorism by exchange of information on terrorism and related issues in a more focussed manner so as to control terrorist activities which threaten the stability of the region. Recent terrorist acts in various parts of the world have demonstrated that terrorism is a global phenomenon, which requires concerted international action

Indonesia:

Prime Minister visited Bali, Indonesia from October 6-8, 2003 to attend the second India-ASEAN summit.

2. As part of "Look East" policy, Prime Minister proposed a new road map for India-ASEAN relationship that would eventually lead to an Asian community. He offered "Open Skies" air connectivity with ASEAN countries, laid emphasis on the on-going trilateral highway project between India, Myanmar and Thailand and the proposed New Delhi-Hanoi rail link. Prime Minister proposed an India-ASEAN Motor Car Rally as a demonstration of India's geographical proximity to ASEAN that would promote road connectivity. He also reiterated India's commitment for cooperation with ASEAN in several sectors and referred to the India-ASEAN vision 2020 document that is currently under preparation by the Indian think Tanks.

3. India signed The Framework Agreement for Comprehensive Cooperation with ASEAN countries towards establishing the free trade area by 2011 for 5 ASEAN countries and by 2016 for Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar and Philippines.

(ii) India and ASEAN adopted a Joint Declaration on Cooperation in

Combating International Terrorism.

(iii) India acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation as a non-member.

The visit has been part of our "Look East" policy. The signing of the Framework Agreement for Comprehensive Cooperation with ASEAN countries has paved the way for eventual Free Trade with ASEAN countries in a phased manner. The Joint Declaration in combating International Terrorism is a major boost to India's efforts in its war against terrorism.

5. There are no joint working groups so far.

Turkey and Tajikistan:

During the last six months till-date, Prime Minister visited Turkey [16-19 September 2003] and Tajikistan [13-14 November 2003].

2. During PM's visit to Turkey, following important issues were discussed: bilateral relations between the two countries; ways and means to augment bilateral economic and trade relations, including in the fields of energy, IT etc.; cooperation in security issues, including through the Joint Working Group on Combating Terrorism, and; defence cooperation. Other issues such as the situation in Iraq were also discussed.

3. During Prime Minister's visit to Tajikistan, review of bilateral relations, economic cooperation programme, and ways and means of developing further bilateral economic and defence cooperation were discussed. International issues and regional situation, including Iraq and Afghanistan were discussed.

4. Yes, Sir. During the visit to Turkey, an Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Science and Technology, a Protocol on setting up of a Joint Working Group on Combating Terrorism and another Protocol on Cooperation in the field of Information Technology and Computer software were signed. In addition, Instruments of Ratification of Extradition Treaty and Agreement on Tourism were exchanged.

5. During PM's visit to Tajikistan, a Treaty on Extradition, Agreement on Exemption of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic Passports, Agreement on Cooperation in Tourism, MOU on Establishment of Indo-Tajik IT Centre, and another MOU on Cooperation in Information Technology and Services were signed. Instruments of Ratification of Agreement on Encouragement and Protection of Investments and Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters were exchanged. In addition, a Joint Declaration on Friendship and Cooperation between India and Tajikistan was also issued at the end of the visit.

6. During PM's visit to Turkey, a Protocol was signed between India and Turkey for setting up of a Joint Working Group on Combating Terrorism.

7. It is expected that through interaction at the Joint Working Group, both the countries can undertake concerted action for combating terrorism. The authorities in both the countries can share their experience concerning, organized crime and illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances as well as their financial linkages.

Syria:

During the PM's visit to Syria, the official discussions with Syrian leadership centered upon bilateral relations as well as regional and international issues of concern.

2. The following nine documents on bilateral cooperation were signed during Syria visit by the Prime Minister:-

Executive Programme for Cultural Cooperation,

- ii) Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation in Information Technology and Services,
- iii) Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the field of Agriculture and Allied Sectors,
- iv) Memorandum of Understanding on Technical Cooperation,
- v) Exchange Programme in the field of Education,
- vi) Cultural Cooperation Agreement between the Arab Writers Union in Syrian Arab Republic and the Sahitya Academy in India,
- vii) Agreement of Mutual Cooperation between National Small Industries Corporation, India and Ministry of Industry of Syrian Arab Republic,
- viii) Executive Work Plan: Department of Biotechnology, Govt. of Republic of India and the Ministry of Higher Education, Syrian Arab Republic, and
- ix) Programme of Cooperation in Science & Technology.

Israel decided to set up Joint Working Group on counter terrorism with India.

4. The mechanism of Joint Working Group provides a useful forum for exchange of views, information and techniques as well as promote bilateral cooperation in combating the terrorism.