

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2763
ANSWERED ON:09.08.2000
VISIT OF AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER
ASHOK KUMAR PATEL;JAIBHAN SINGH PAWAYA;SHEELA GAUTAM

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Prime Minister of Australia visited India recently;
- (b) if so, the details of the talks held with the Indian Leaders;
- (c) the outcome thereof;
- (d) whether Australia has agreed to reopen its Defence Advisory Office in New Delhi;
- (e) if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) the time by which it is likely to be opened?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SH. AJIT KUMAR PANJA)

a) Yes, Sir. On July 10-11, 2000

b) During his visit PM John Howard met President, Vice President, Prime Minister, External Affairs Minister, Minister of Finance, Minister of Commerce & Industry and Leader of the Opposition. The talks focussed on enlargement of bilateral relations although multilateral and global issues, including the problem in Fiji, were also discussed. Both sides agreed that efforts should be made to strengthen our relations, especially through increased trade and economic links and investments.

c) Prime Minister John Howard described his visit as an attempt to bring `energy and vigour` into India-Australia relations. This outcome was substantially achieved.

d) & e) During an earlier visit by Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer to India in March, 2000, both sides agreed on the resumption of defence ties in principle. Subsequently, an Australian defence team visited New Delhi on 26 May, 2000 and discussed with the officials of Ministry of Defence, the modalities of resuming defence ties including by reopening the Defence Advisor`s office in New Delhi.

f) The Australian Defence Advisor`s office in New Delhi (and ours in Canberra) is likely to be reopened early in 2001.