

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:180

ANSWERED ON:23.11.2005

VISIT OF FOREIGN DIGNITARIES

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Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) foreign dignitaries who visited India since August, 2005 till date;
- (b) the issues on which deliberations were held with each of the dignitaries, country-wise; (
- (c) whether any bilateral agreements were signed with them;
- (d) if so, the details thereof with the gains likely to be accrued to India as a result of these agreements;
- (e) the details of visits undertaken by the PM and EAM during the above period;
- (f) the details of agreements and discussion held with various countries, country-wise; and
- (g) the steps taken to strengthen the relations with these countries?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (RAO INDERJIT SINGH)

Part-I (a) to (d) & (g): The details of the foreign dignitaries who visited India since August 2005 till date, the issues on which deliberations were held with each of the dignitaries, country-wise, and bilateral agreements signed with them with details thereof with likely gains which are to be accrued to India as a result of these agreements, are given below, country-wise:-

BHUTAN

His Majesty the King of Bhutan visited India from 1st to 4th August 2005. The visit was part of the regular exchange of visits at high-level between India and Bhutan. During the visit, bilateral issues of mutual interest as well as cooperation in wide range of areas particularly hydropower generation were discussed.

SRI LANKA

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Anura Bandaranaike visited India on August 25-26, 2005. Discussions were held on the whole range of issues of mutual concern and on ways and means of further strengthening bilateral relations.

MALDIVES

The Foreign Minister of Maldives Dr Ahmed Shaheed visited India on August 11-14, 2005. He met EAM and called on PM. The discussions covered the entire gamut of bilateral relations as also other issues of mutual interest. Dr Shaheed, accompanied by the Finance Minister of Maldives visited India again on September 6-8, 2005 and sought financial assistance for Maldives to enable it to tide over difficult budgetary situation owing to post- Tsunami reconstruction commitments. A cash aid of Rs 10 crores was announced by the Government of India.

CHINA

Mr. Liu Yunshan, Politburo Member and Minister, Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC), visited India from October 27-November 1, 2005. Mr. Wang Zhaoguo, Politburo Member of the CPC and Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China, visited India from November 8-14, 2005.

During the visit of Mr. Liu Yunshan, who was invited by the Minister of Information and Broadcasting, discussions took place on promoting exchanges between India and China in the field of culture, media, films etc. There were also discussions on bilateral relations and regional and international issues of common interest.

During the visit of Mr. Wang Zhaoguo, discussions included cooperation between the Indian Parliament and China's National People's Congress. There were also discussion on bilateral relations and regional and international issues of common interest.

AFGHANISTAN

Afghan Minister for Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Mohammad Hanif Atmar, visited India from October 1-6, 2005. He held discussions with various officials from different ministries on issues related to reconstruction of the rural infrastructure especially in the field of non-farm agro-industries, institution building in Afghanistan, developing rural enterprise, framing of Afghan policy in the field of

Rural Development, human resource capacity building, understand the working of Panchayati Raj system, building of rural road and setting up of 400 micro hydel projects.

Dr Zalmi Rassoul, National Security Advisor of Afghanistan visited India on November 14-17, 2005 to attend the third Hindustan Times Leadership Initiative Conference to be held in New Delhi on November 15-16, 2005. During the visit, he also held discussions with Indian interlocutors on issues related to recently held Parliamentary elections in Afghanistan and security situation in Afghanistan.

IRAN

Dr Ali Larijani, Secretary of Supreme National Security Council of Iran visited India on August 30-31, 2005 to discuss issues related to bilateral cooperation in various fields and Iran's nuclear programme.

STATE OF KUWAIT

Mr. Ahmed Yaqoub Baqer, Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs of the State of Kuwait accompanied by a five-member delegation visited India from 15-17 August 2005. Bilateral relations and matters of mutual interest were discussed. Agreement between India and Kuwait on Juridical and Judicial Cooperation in Civil and Commercial Matters was signed. The agreement provides for mutual legal and judicial assistance in civil and commercial matters.

RUSSIA

Mr. Sergei Ivanov, Defence Minister of Russia visited India from 15-17 October 2005 and Mr. Igor Ivanov, Secretary of the Russian Security Council from 21-23 October.

The Russian Defence Minister reviewed with Raksha Mantri all aspects of our defence relations. He met with National Security Advisor (NSA) and called on Prime Minister to discuss security issues. Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation had a detailed meeting with NSA on security issues and also met with EAM.

Our time-tested and multi-faceted relations with Russia are marked by mutual exchanges of high-level visits and constant dialogue at all levels, including annual summit meetings, a range of joint cooperation programmes spanning defence, high-technology, S&T, culture, etc. and forward looking plans and programmes including those in trade and economic fields.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Czech President Mr. Vaclav Klaus visited India from 6-12 November 2005. Deliberations focused on various aspects of the extensive political, economic, tourism, cultural and defence cooperation between India and the Czech Republic, including the energy and infrastructure sectors, automotive sector, and information technology, with particular emphasis on the enormous potential for Czech investments in India.

FIJI

Mr. Laisenia Qarase, Prime Minister of Fiji paid an official visit to India from October 8-15, 2005. He was accompanied by Minister for Commerce, Business Development and Investment, Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade and Minister for Multi Ethnic Affairs and a 25 member business delegation. During his visit, PM Qarase had meetings with President, Prime Minister and Speaker of Lok Sabha and discussed bilateral matters and issues of common concern. Agreements on Cooperation in Health and Tourism and MoUs on the Establishment of a Joint Trade Committee and Cooperation in IT were signed in the presence of the two Prime Ministers on October 10, 2005. An MoU was also signed with FICCI for the establishment of a Joint Business Council between the two countries. The signing of the Agreements will contribute to the all round development of relations between India and Fiji.

MAURITIUS

Prime Minister of Mauritius Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam visited India from 23-28 October 2005. During the visit of the Prime Minister of Mauritius, discussions were held on cooperation in the areas of Information Technology, development of Small and Medium Enterprises, renewable energy and infrastructure, construction of Supreme Court building in Mauritius with Indian assistance, supply of Electronic Voting Machines to Mauritius, India's candidature for permanent seat in the UN Security Council (UNSC), and extending Indian assistance by way of Line of Credit and Grant. Following seven bilateral Agreements/MOUs were signed with the Republic of Mauritius during the visit of the Mauritian Prime Minister:

- i) Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters.
- ii) Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons
- iii) MOU for Cooperation in the field of Hydrography
- iv) MOU on Harmonisation of Standards between concerned agencies.
- v) MOU for Cooperation on Consumer Protection and Legal Metrology.
- vi) MOU between IIPA and Government of Mauritius
- vii) MOU on Preferential Trade Agreement

These agreements/MOUs are expected to benefit both the countries mutually.

Mr. Madan Murlidhar Dulloo, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Cooperation of the Republic of Mauritius visited India from 28 August to 3 September 2005. During his visit, discussions were held on development of new and modern technologies, particularly in the ICT sector. Both sides also explored new avenues of cooperation in the renewable and environment-friendly sources and noted the progress made in talks on the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) to be

signed with Mauritius.

SEYCHELES

President of Seychelles Mr. James Alix Michel visited India from 31 July to 2 August 2005. With the Republic of Seychelles, discussions covered cooperation in the fields of health, providing training to police personnel of Seychelles, setting up an IT Centre in Seychelles, extending financial assistance by India, India's candidature for a permanent seat in the UNSC and extending Indian assistance by way of Line of Credit and grant.

ZAMBIA

Mr. Ng`andu Peter Magande, Zambian Minister of Finance and National Planning visited India from 9-10 August 2005. The purpose of the visit was to co-chair the India-Zambia Joint Economic Commission meeting. Possibilities of cooperation between the two countries in various fields specifically railways, agriculture, solar energy, IT and exchange of agricultural graduates were discussed.

SOUTH AFRICA

A high-level delegation from South Africa led by Dr. Essop Pahad, Minister in the Presidency visited India from 14 -17 November 2005. South Africa has sought our comprehensive assistance in ways to overcome shortages of skills in many key sectors facing the country and try to understand how India has tackled the problem of human resources development, particularly at the provincial/municipal levels.

BURKINA FASO

Mr. Jean batiste Marie Pscal Compaore, Minister of Finance and Budget of Burkina Faso, accompanied by Mr. Jean de dieu Somda, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, visited India from July 30 to August 3, 2005. During the visit, Agreement with the Exim Bank for a Line of Credit was signed.

MALI

Minister of Economy & Finance of Mali Mr. Abou Bakar Traore accompanied by Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Mines visited India from August 7-14, 2005. Agreement for Line of Credit of US\$ 54.10 M under Team -9 and NEPAD was signed during their visit.

REPUBLIC OF GUINEA

Mr. Theirno Abib Diallo, Minister for Cooperation of the Republic of Guinea led a Guinean delegation from September 10-17, 2005. Discussions were held to strengthen bilateral cooperation between India and the Republic of Guinea.

AFRICAN UNION

Dr. Bernard Zoba, Commissioner of Infra & Energy of African Union visited India from October 25-29, 2005. During his visit, a MoU between India and the African Union for setting up of a Pan-African e-network was signed on 27 October 2005.

UNITED KINGDOM

Prime Minister Tony Blair of United Kingdom accompanied by Mr. Alan Johnson, Secretary of State for Trade & Industry visited India from 6-8 September 2005 for the India-UK Summit held on 8 September 2005. During their visit, bilateral, regional and global issues were discussed. Air Services Agreement and a MoU on Cooperation in the field of hydrocarbons were signed. Air Services Agreement would substantially increase direct direct flights between India and UK and facilitate business, tourism & travel, while MoU on Cooperation in the field of Hydrocarbons would facilitate exchange of information on good practices in exploration and also greater investment in this sector.

Dr. John Reid, Secretary of State for Defence, visited India from October 5-6, 2005. Bilateral, regional and global issues were discussed during the visit.

NETHERLAND

Mr. Laurens Jan Brinkhorst, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economic Affairs of Netherland visited India from October 21-26, 2005. Bilateral, regional and global issues were discussed during his visit.

ITALY

Mr. Pietro Lunardi, Italian Minister of Transport and Infrastructure visited India from September 19-21, 2005. Discussions in areas of transport and infrastructure were held during his visit.

EUROPEAN UNION

UK Prime Minister Tony Blair (EU Presidency); Mr. Jose Manuel Barroso, President, European Commission, Dr. Javier Solana, EU Secretary General and High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy; Dr. (Ms.) Benita Ferrero Waldner, EU Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy and Mr. Peter Mandelson, Commissioner for Trade visited India on September 7, 2005 for the 6th Indo-EU Summit. Agreements signed during the visit included: India-EU Joint Action Plan: Comprehensive framework for deepening cooperation and engagement over a range of sectors as envisaged in the Strategic Partnership; India-EU Political Declaration; and Framework Agreement on India's Participation in GALILEO Satellite Navigation Project. (India would benefit by participating in this EU-led high-technology satellite navigation project.)

USA

U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Rob Portman co-chaired the inaugural session of the India - US Trade Policy Forum in New Delhi on November 12, 2005. The agenda for this first meeting of the Forum included discussions on Tariff and Non-Tariff Barriers; Agriculture; Investment; Services; Intellectual Property; and the Doha Round. No agreement was signed during the visit.

U.S. Treasury Secretary John W. Snow led an official delegation to India to co-chair the India-U.S. Financial and Economic Forum, which is part of the broader U.S.-Indian Economic Dialogue. The delegations discussed a number of key issues, including fiscal and

tax policies, U.S. and Indian efforts to accelerate the WTO Doha Round negotiations, strengthening India's infrastructure, and collective efforts to combat money laundering and financing of terrorism. During the visit India and US signed a cooperation framework agreement that will facilitate U.S. Trade and Development Agency projects in India.

CANADA

International Trade Minister of Canada Mr. Jim Peterson led the Canadian delegation in the Technology Summit, jointly organized by Ministry of Science & Technology and CII, held in New Delhi from 21-22 September 2005. Mr Jim Peterson held discussion with MOS (S&T), Commerce and Industries Minister regarding cooperation in the field of S&T, Nano-technology, trade.

Minister of Environment of Canada Mr. Stéphanie Dion visited Delhi from Sept 5 - 6, 2005. Mr. Stéphanie Dion held discussion with Minister of Environment and Forest regarding Indian participation in the Eleventh Conference of the Parties (COP 11) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the first Meeting of the Parties (MOP 1) to the Kyoto Protocol in Montreal, Canada from 28 November to 9 December 2005 and cooperation in the field of environment and climate changes.

MEXICO

Ms. Lourdes Aranda Bezaury, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico led the Mexican delegation for the 4th India-Mexico Joint Commission Meeting at New Delhi on October 20-21, 2005. The two sides reviewed the bilateral relations and discussed issues of mutual interest, which included trade and commerce, culture, education, science & technology, agriculture etc. During the visit, four MOUs were signed. The details are as follows:

(i) Visa Exemption for Diplomatic and Official passport holders.

(ii) Academic cooperation between FSI, India and MRI, Mexico

(iii) Cultural Exchange Programme

(iv) Educational Exchange Programme

(v) Programme of Cooperation in Science & Technology

These MOUs would facilitate close cooperation and understanding in the diplomatic, academic, cultural, educational and science & technology fields. Mexico also organized a painting exhibition of Fernando Garcia Ponce at National Museum, New Delhi.

Part-II (e) & (f): The details of visits undertaken by the Prime Minister (PM) and External Affairs Minister (EAM) during the above period, and details of agreements and discussions held with various countries are given below country-wise:

Details of visits undertaken by the PM

BANGLADESH

Prime Minister visited Dhaka to attend 13th SAARC Summit held on November 12-13, 2005. Following Agreements were signed during the 13th SAARC Summit:

(i) Agreement of Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters

(ii) Limited Multilateral Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation and Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters

(iii) Agreement for Establishment of SAARC Arbitration Council

AFGHANISTAN

Prime Minister visited Afghanistan on August 28-29, 2005. During the visit, discussions were held with Afghan officials on broad range of bilateral issues as well as regional and international issues of common concern. Prime Minister reaffirmed India's continued commitment towards Afghanistan's reconstruction and pledged an additional financial assistance of US \$50 million to Afghanistan. Prime Minister announced additional scholarships and short-term training fellowships for Afghan students and agreed to assist in establishing Vocational Training Centres in Kabul. The foundation stone for Afghanistan's new Parliament building was also laid in the presence of Prime Minister and President Karzai, to be constructed with India's assistance. Three MoUs/Agreements were signed during the visit. These included a MoU on Small Development Projects, an Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Healthcare and Medicinal Science and a MoU on Cooperation in the field of Agricultural Research and Education. A Joint Press Statement was also issued stressing on establishment of peace and security in democratic and prosperous Afghanistan. Also, India announced to cooperate with Afghanistan in building of democratic institutions, infrastructure and human capacity as well as support Afghanistan's engagement with SAARC and increased consultation and cooperation in the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan gas pipeline to India.

FRANCE

On his way to the UNGA Session in New York, Prime Minister visited France from September 11-13, 2005 and exchanged views with President Chirac and Prime Minister Villepin on bilateral, regional and global issues. A Joint Statement was issued during the visit.

USA

Prime Minister led the Indian delegation, which included former EAM, to attend the World Summit that took place at the UN Headquarters in New York on September 14-16, 2005. PM visited New York from September 13-16; (former EAM stayed on till September 25).

PM addressed the High Level Plenary Meeting of the 60th Session of the UN General Assembly, which focused on the

implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the reform of the United Nations. PM's address covered a number of issues of concern to the international community, including the urgent need for the reform of the UN, terrorism, development, environmental degradation, climate change and the eradication of poverty and pandemics. PM also attended the international launch of the UN Democracy Fund on September 14, at which he and the US President flanked the UN Secretary General. India has pledged an amount of US\$ 10 million for this Fund, out of which US\$ 5 million has already been released, making it the largest single remittance so far.

PM's programme also included bilateral meetings with Presidents of USA, China, Pakistan and Russia; working dinner hosted by Malaysian PM as NAM Chair; meeting of IBSA Heads of State/Government; call by Jewish Groups in USA; luncheon meeting with select CEOs and interaction with the Indian community at a reception hosted by our Ambassador.

PM met President George W. Bush during his visit to New York on September 13, 2005. They exchanged views on the developments following the understandings reached during PM's visit to Washington in July 2005.

There has been steady progress in relations between India and the US in recent times. There is a strong commitment on both sides to carry this process forward and to further widen, deepen and strengthen these ties. India and US interaction today includes strategic and security issues, defence, counter-terrorism, counter-proliferation, science and technology, health, trade, space, energy and environment. There is an increasing convergence of views on global, regional and bilateral issues of mutual concern.

Details of visits undertaken by EAM

BHUTAN

EAM visited Bhutan from 17th to 19th October 2005. The two visits are part of the regular exchange of visits at high-level between India and Bhutan. During these visits, bilateral issues of mutual interest as well as cooperation in wide range of areas particularly hydropower generation were discussed.

PAKISTAN

EAM visited Pakistan from October 2-5, 2005 for a review meeting on the progress of the second round of the Composite Dialogue. This was followed by a plenary meeting of the revived Pakistan-India Joint Commission on October 4, 2005, where it was decided that the next meeting of the Joint Commission will be preceded by technical level working groups on Agriculture, Health, Science & Technology, Information, Education, I.T. & Telecommunication, Environment and Tourism. During the visit, both sides agreed to undertake a joint survey of the Sir Creek itself before the end of the year, and to consider options for the delimitation of their maritime boundary. The Agreement on Pre-Notification of Flight Testing of Ballistic Missiles and the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Establishment of a Communication Link between the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency and the Indian Coast Guards were signed in the presence of the two Foreign ministers. The Indian side presented drafts for consideration proposing amendments to the existing agreements on visa, visits to religious shrines and new proposals for a Cultural Exchange Programme.

IRAN

EAM visited Iran from September 2-4, 2005. The visit was the first high-level visit from India after the formation of the new government of President Mahmoud Ahmadi-Nejad. EAM called on President Ahmadi-Nejad and had meetings with Speaker Haddad-Adel, National Security Advisor Dr. Ali Larijani and Foreign Minister Mottaki. In bilateral discussions, both sides reiterated their keenness to move forward in all areas of bilateral relations and to impart greater strategic content to the relationship. No Agreement was signed during the visit.

RUSSIA

EAM paid a visit to Russia from 25-28 October 2005. The document that was signed during EAM's October visit to Russia was protocol of the 11th session of the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation. EAM had one to one and delegation level meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Zhukov to discuss all aspects of trade, economic, technological and cultural cooperation. He called on President Putin to discuss entire range of bilateral relations and to exchange views on regional and international issues of mutual concern. EAM had a detailed meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. EAM also represented India in the SCO Heads of State meeting in Moscow on 26 October 2005.

USA

Former EAM accompanied PM to attend the World Summit that took place at the UN Headquarters in New York on September 14-16, 2005. Former EAM stayed on till September 25. Former EAM addressed the General Debate of the UN General Assembly on September 19, participated in a number of multilateral meetings and had bilateral meetings with his counterparts from over 20 countries.

Former EAM participated in the meetings of the Foreign Ministers of NAM, G-77, G-15, SAARC, CMAG, IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa), Asia Cooperation Dialogue and India-China-Russia Trilateral. He chaired meetings of the G-4 (India, Brazil, Germany and Japan) Foreign Ministers/senior officials, Team-9 (a GOI initiative for development cooperation with West Africa) and the ANDEAN Community (at which Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela were represented), and attended a meeting of the India-GCC Political Dialogue. Former EAM had a meeting with the UN Secretary General, addressed a luncheon meeting jointly hosted by the Council on Foreign Relations and Asia Society, and delivered the India series inaugural lecture at Brown University on 'The Argument for India'. EAM had bilateral meetings with his counterparts from Afghanistan, Chile, Cuba, Greece, Jamaica, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Norway, Palestine, Romania, Senegal, Sudan, Turkey, Uganda, USA, Vietnam and Zambia. Former EAM also had a meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand, who sought his support for latter's likely candidature for the post of UNSG.

EAM had a cordial and friendly meeting with Dr. Condoleezza Rice, U.S. Secretary of State, at Waldorf Astoria in New York on September 19, 2005. The meeting was a follow-up to the meetings our Prime Minister had with President Bush on September 13 and with Dr. Rice on September 15. EAM and the Secretary of State reviewed recent developments on several multilateral and regional

issues.

CANADA

Former EAM visited Canada from 25-27 September 2005. No agreement was signed during EAM's visit to Canada. It was agreed to hold the Energy Dialogue and Nuclear Safety Dialogue with Canada. Canada agreed to allow supply of nuclear-related dual-use items to the Indian civilian nuclear facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, in accordance with the NSG Dual - Use Guidelines. The two ministers agreed that continued high-level engagement is essential to building the partnership.