

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:158

ANSWERED ON:01.12.2004

VISIT OF INDIAN DELEGATION TO ABROAD

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

- (a) The details of the Indian Delegations who visited various countries including the PM and EAM, in the last three months till date, country-wise;
- (b) the details of deliberations held and the agreements signed on the said occasions including the terms of agreements;
- (c) the benefits likely to be accrued by the said agreements; and
- (d) the steps taken by the Government to strengthen the relations with foreign countries?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

The details of visits of Indian Delegations, including that of PM and EAM during the last three months, along with details of deliberations held, agreements signed, likely benefits to be accrued and steps taken by Government to strengthen relations with other countries, are given below country-wise:

**BHUTAN**

I

(a) - (d) Shri K. Natwar Singh, External Affairs Minister visited Bhutan from 12-13 October, 2004. EAM was received by His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuck and held wide ranging discussions on bilateral and regional issues of mutual interests, including security related issues. The visit provided an excellent opportunity to review and further strengthen the close and mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation between India and Bhutan.

II

(a) - (d) The Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri Rao Inderjit Singh visited Bhutan (20-24 October, 2004) on the occasion of Investiture Ceremony of HRH Crown Prince as Chhoetse Penelop; the gesture of the Government of India in sending its Minister for this important occasion was greatly appreciated by the Royal Government of Bhutan. During the visit, MOS (EA) also signed an agreement on Project Implementation Mechanism, which is expected to streamline the implementation and monitoring of GOI-assisted projects being undertaken under the five-year Plans of Bhutan.

**SRI LANKA**

(a) Minister of State for External Affairs Shri E. Ahmed visited Sri Lanka from August 24-26, 2004.

(b) MOS (EA) attended a meeting of IOR-ARC countries meant to augment cooperation among Indian Ocean rim countries. No agreement was signed.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) There is frequent contact at multiple levels between the governments of the two countries; work on strengthening the framework of economic cooperation through a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement has begun; Defence Cooperation is increasing; infrastructural and transport linkages are being augmented.

**IRAN**

(a) Shri J.N. Dixit, National Security Advisor visited the Islamic Republic of Iran from October 17-18, 2004 at the invitation of Dr. Hassan Rohani, Secretary, Supreme National Security Council of Iran.

(b) During his visit NSA had wide-ranging discussions with his counterpart Dr. Rohani. He also called on the President of Iran Hojjatoeslam Mohammad Khatami and Chairman of the Expediency Council Hojjatoeslam Ali Akbar Rafsanjani and Speaker Majlis

Dr. Gholam Ali Haddad Adel. Shri Dixit also met the Foreign Minister of Iran, Dr. Kamal Kharrazi. In the discussions, both sides exchanged views on the enhancement and further consolidation of their bilateral relations. The two sides also reaffirmed their commitment to intensify cooperation in such sectors as energy, transit and trade. Views were exchanged on regional issues including Iraq and Afghanistan. The Iranian side also apprised the Indian side of its efforts on peaceful uses of nuclear energy. No agreements were signed during the visit.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) India and Iran are committed to expand and consolidate the cooperative framework of their multifaceted bilateral ties and are conscious of the need to build a framework for strategic cooperation. As per the MoU on the Road Map to Strategic Cooperation signed between the two countries in January 2003, the two countries are following a focused approach to strengthening bilateral cooperation in the spheres of political dialogue, energy, trade and transit and science and technology.

#### AFGHANISTAN

(a) Shri J.N. Dixit, National Security Advisor visited Afghanistan on October 19, 2004.

(b) During his short visit to Kabul, NSA called on President Karzai, Vice President & Defence Minister Marshal Fahim and Foreign Minister Dr. Abdullah Abdullah. In the meetings, the two sides discussed bilateral, regional and international issues of common interest. The focus of the discussions was on India's Assistance program to Afghanistan's reconstruction. The Afghan side conveyed their appreciation for extensive contribution of India to Afghanistan's economic reconstruction and rehabilitation. No agreements were signed during the visit.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) To strengthen relations with Afghanistan, there have been intensive political interactions with a cross-section of Afghan leadership through high level political exchanges and Government of India has provided extensive humanitarian, financial and project assistance for Afghanistan's reconstruction.

#### QATAR

(a) Shri E. Ahamed, Minister of State for External Affairs, visited from 15th-16th September 2004.

(b) to (d) Held discussions with H.E. Mr. Ahmad bin Abdulla Al Mahmoud, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. The discussions covered bilateral relations, regional and international issues. No agreements were signed during the visit.

#### UAE

(a) Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, President, accompanied by Shri E. Ahamed, Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri P.R. Chauhan, Minister of State in Prime Minister's Office, and senior officials, visited Abu Dhabi on November 3-4, 2004 to offer condolences to the bereaved Al Nahyan family on the demise of UAE President Sheikh Zayed Sultan bin Al Nahyan.

(b) - (d) The visit was used to underline the importance we attach to our relations with UAE, which is home to 1.2 million persons from India and a large market for our products. Sheikh Zayed had played a vital role in fostering this relationship.

#### OMAN

(a) Shri E. Ahamed, Minister of State for External Affairs visited from 4th to 7th November 2004.

(b) - (d) Held discussions with the Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs, Minister of Commerce & Industry, Minister of Manpower and the Minister of Heritage & Culture, and H.H. Sayyid Haitham bin Tareq Al Said, a senior member of the Royal Family. The discussions covered matters of mutual interest, bilateral trade and economic ties and issues regarding the Indian work force in Oman. No agreements were signed during the visit.

#### TANZANIA

(a) to (d) President Shri A.P.J. Abdul Kalam visited Tanzania from 10-14 September 2004.

Hon'ble President held discussions with President Mkapa and with a number of other Ministers on matters of mutual interest. The important subjects discussed were assistance to Tanzania in fields of agriculture and small-scale industries. Discussions were also held for cooperation in the field of Information Technology between the two countries. Two agreements were signed with Tanzania: one for waiver of loan granted to it earlier and the other for cooperation in the field of Information Technology. Assistance for a Pan-African Satellite/fibre-optic network for tele-education and tele-medicine was also discussed.

The visits were intended to improve and strengthen our relations with African countries and to give impetus to our relations with African countries in general and with Tanzania and South Africa in particular. These visits were in keeping with India's 'Focus Africa' policy.

As a part of India's 'Focus Africa' policy, Government has been consistently trying to improve and strengthen our relations with African countries. Conscious of the economic difficulties being faced by some of the African countries, India has been helping these countries by providing them aid in the form of foodgrains and medicines. With a view to assist their human resource development India is also

imparting training to African nationals in various fields.

## SOUTH AFRICA

(a) - (d) President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam visited South Africa from 15-17 September 2004.

The President met President Mbeki and some other dignitaries, including Dr. Nelson Mandela. Discussions were held on matters of mutual concern in both bilateral and multilateral fields. An agreement was signed between the two countries for cooperation in the field of Information Technology.

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As a part of India's 'Focus Africa' policy, Government has been consistently trying to improve and strengthen our relations with African countries. Conscious of the economic difficulties being faced by some of the African countries, India has been helping these countries by providing them aid in the form of foodgrains and medicines. With a view to assist their human resource development India is also imparting training to African nationals in various fields.

## USA

(a) PM led the Indian delegation to the 59th session of the UN General Assembly, held in New York in September 2004. EAM accompanied the PM and participated in the UN General Assembly (UNGA).

(b) to (d) PM addressed the UNGA on September 23, 2004. In his address to the UNGA, and in the bilateral interactions of PM and EAM, a number of important issues on the international agenda were covered. India's participation was active and constructive.

Prime Minister met with President Bush on 21 September 2004 in New York. They held wide-ranging discussions including developments of bilateral relations, terrorism, and global trade. The two leaders exchanged thoughts on their shared global concerns and agreed that making the world a safer place was an overriding priority. They agreed that stronger partnership between India and the United States, two nations sharing values and traditions, acting in concert in international institutions, would enhance global security and prosperity.

To strengthen relations further with US, Indian Government is focusing on Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP), High Technology Cooperation Group (HTCG) and the bilateral Economic Dialogue. This is already giving results in the form of liberalized licenses on exports of dual use and high technology items from US. With respect to Canada, India is seeking investments in the area of Infrastructure.

## VIETNAM

(a) A delegation headed by EAM visited Hanoi 15th -18th October, 2004.

(b) The visit was in connection with the 12th India-Vietnam Joint Commission and in the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Pandit Nehru's meeting with President Ho Chi Minh. During the visit joint agreed minutes were adopted along with an Action Plan for the years 2004-2006 for promoting bilateral ties in all areas.

(c) The agreed minutes of the 12th Joint Commission as well as the Action Plan for 2004-2006 provide for clearly identified activities for promoting bilateral relations in all areas.

(d) The Government remains in regular and close contact with all the countries for strengthening our ties in the bilateral, regional and multilateral context. This involves high-level bilateral visits, contacts at the multilateral institutions and the day-to-day efforts by our Mission.

## THAILAND

(a) EAM paid a transit visit to Bangkok on 15th/16th October 2004 on his way to Hanoi.

(b) No agreement was signed, as this was only a transit visit. However, EAM had an opportunity of meeting his Thai counterpart to take stock of the growing bilateral relationship.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The Government remains in regular and close contact with all the countries for strengthening our ties in the bilateral, regional and multilateral context. This involves high-level bilateral visits, contacts at the multilateral institutions and the day-to-day efforts by our Mission.

## PALESTINE

(a) A delegation led by MOS (EA) Shri E. Ahmed visited Palestine from September 17-19, 2004.

(b) The visiting delegation called on President Yasir Arafat, the President of Palestine National Authority and the Foreign Minister Dr.

Nabil Sha'ath. During these meetings, issues relating to Middle East Peace Process as well as other bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of mutual interests were discussed. During the visit, MOS(EA) handed over 12 TATA Safari vehicles and medicines worth 2 Crores totally to the Palestinian National Authority. No agreements were signed during the visit.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The visit reflected the Government of India's continued commitment and support to the Palestinian cause, including to the relief and reconstruction efforts of the Palestinian National Authority.

#### EGYPT

(a) - (d) A delegation led by External Affairs Minister which included Minister of Railways, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Urban Development, Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri Sitaram Yechuri CPM Politburo, Shri Rajiv Sikri Secretary(East) and other officials represented India at the condolence ceremony held in Cairo in honour of President Yasir Arafat, President of the Palestinian National Authority.

#### PANAMA / COLOMBIA / EL SALVADOR / DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

(a) to (d) Shri Rao Inderjit Singh, MOS for External Affairs visited Panama, Colombia, El Salvador and Dominican Republic from 30 August to 9 September 2004 promoting bilateral and business relations, seeking support for our candidature to Permanent Membership of UNSC, highlighting emergence of India as an economic power and emphasizing our commitment to the region.

The thrust of our policy in the Latin American and Caribbean regions is to strengthen and widen the existing relationship to realize greater political understanding to work together at bilateral and multilateral level, exploring ways to enhance trade and commerce. Initiatives are taken to engage regional groups for political dialogue. India has signed framework Agreement with regional groupings such as MERCOSUR, CAN (Andean Community), CARICOM and SICA covering the whole region.

#### KAZAKHSTAN

(a) - (d) EAM led Indian delegation to the Ministerial Meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) held in Almaty, Kazakhstan from October 21-22, 2004. The meeting adopted the following documents:-

1) CICA Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures

2) CICA Rules and Procedures

EAM also utilized the opportunity to have bilateral consultations with President Nazarbayev and Foreign Minister Tokayev of Kazakhstan. No agreements were signed during the visit. Cooperation in oil and gas Information Technology was discussed in the two bilateral meetings. A trilateral meeting with Foreign Ministers of China and Russia was also held on the sidelines of the meeting. The CICA Ministerial Meeting marked another step in the evolution of CICA. India has been actively participating in CICA in keeping within its commitment of promoting greater trust and confidence.

#### CHINA

(a) to (d) Shri J.N. Dixit, National Security Advisor, visited from 17-19 November 2004 to hold 4th Special Representatives' Meeting.

#### BELGIUM

(a) EAM visited Belgium from 12-14 September 2004.

(b) EAM met Dutch Foreign Minister Mr. Bernard Bot, the EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Mr. Javier Solana, European Commissioner for External Relations, Mr. Chris Patten, European Commissioner- designate for External Relations, Ms Benita Ferrero Waldner and Belgian Foreign Minister, Mr. Karel De Gucht. The discussions focussed on preparation for the 5th India-EU Summit. Both sides exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual concern. No agreement was signed during the visit.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The visit was in connection with preparation for the 5th India-EU Summit at the Hague in the Netherlands .

#### UK

(a) PM led a delegation including EAM to U.K. on 19- 20 September 2004.

(b) PM had wide ranging discussions on bilateral, regional and international issues with British Prime Minister Tony Blair. EAM met, UK Foreign Secretary Mr. Jack Straw separately. PM interacted with a high level British Corporate delegation and met a delegation from Labour Party Friends of India group in British Parliament. No agreement was signed during the visit.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) During the visit the two sides issued a joint declaration on 'India-UK: Towards a new and dynamic partnership' that outlined the

areas of future cooperation in our strategic relations

#### THE NETHERLANDS

(a) PM led a delegation, which comprised EAM and Commerce and Industry Minister to the 5th India-EU Summit at the Hague from 7-9 November 2004.

(b) The EU side was led by Dutch Prime Minister Jan-Peter Balkenende, in his capacity as President-in-Office of the European Council, and included Mr. Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission. We agreed to strengthen and deepen our bilateral relations including Parliamentary exchanges and Civil Society interaction and cooperation in Energy, Environment and Science & Technology. We agreed to intensify consultation on UN Reforms and Cooperation in Counter Terrorism. PM called on Queen Beatrix and participated in the 'India-EU Business Round Table' - a select group of Indian and European CEOs. EAM had a bilateral meeting with Dutch Foreign Minister Bernard Bot. No agreements were signed during the visit.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) A Joint Press Statement was adopted at the conclusion of the Summit, reflecting our shared perceptions on various issues of mutual concern. The Joint Declaration on Cultural Cooperation, which is annexed to the Joint Press Statement, will provide a broad framework for our enhanced cooperation in culture, including exchanges of scholars and students as well as techniques and know-how in conservation and restoration of works of art and monuments.

The 5th India-EU Summit represents a landmark in India-EU relations for it launched the 'India-EU Strategic Partnership' in recognition of the growing stature of India as a major regional and global player.