

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:420

ANSWERED ON:22.04.2015

ASEAN SUMMIT

Singh Deo Shri Kalikesh Narayan;Sundaram Shri P.R.

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

- (a) whether the ASEAN countries held a summit recently and if so, the details of subjects which came up for discussion in the said meet along with the outcome thereof;
- (b) whether India made a proposal for forming a strong grouping around the Indian Ocean region in the wake of growing Chinese influence in the South China Sea and if so, the reaction of the member countries in this regard;
- (c) the salient features of Project Mausam being launched by India along with other initiatives taken/likely to be taken to secure the long-term interests of the country in South China Sea; and
- (d) the various steps taken to further boost bilateral relations with ASEAN countries?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 420 REGARDING "ASEAN SUMMIT" TO BE ANSWERED ON 22.04.2015

(a) As per information available from open sources, the leaders of the 10 ASEAN member states met in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar for the 25th ASEAN Summit on 12 November 2014. They reviewed progress in the ASEAN community building process across the three pillars, i.e. political- security, economic and socio-cultural, and tasked their officials to draft the post-2015 vision for the regional grouping. They took stock of developments in intra-ASEAN cooperation in a wide range of fields such as human rights, disaster management, addressing traditional and non- traditional security challenges, parliamentary relations, trade, investment, tourism, connectivity, people-to-people linkages, etc. The summary of outcomes of the ASEAN Summit was reflected in the Chairman's Statement of the 25th ASEAN Summit: "Moving Forward in Unity to a Peaceful and Prosperous Community," which is an open document and is available on the internet.

(b) No, Madam.

(c) Project Mausam is a Ministry of Culture led project aimed at understanding how the knowledge and manipulation of the monsoon winds has shaped interactions across the Indian Ocean and led to the spread of shared knowledge systems, traditions, technologies and ideas along maritime routes. At the macro level, Project Mausam aims to re-connect and re-establish communications between countries of the Indian Ocean so as to lead to an enhanced understanding of cultural values and concerns, while at the micro level, the focus is on the understanding of national cultures in their regional maritime milieu. Maritime security and cooperation are important dimensions of India's bilateral relations with countries of the region. India remains engaged with relevant countries and various regional fora such as the East Asia Summit, ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum to promote peace and stability in the South China Sea.

(d) India's relations with ASEAN are one of the cornerstones of the Government's Act East Policy. India-ASEAN relations were upgraded to a Strategic Partnership in 2012 and there are today more than 30 dialogue mechanisms for cooperation in a range of sectors identified as priority areas in the ongoing ASEAN-India Plan of Action for the period 2010-15. The Government in January 2015 has also set up a separate Indian Mission to ASEAN in Jakarta to strengthen engagement with ASEAN Member States. The ASEAN-India Trade in Services and Investment Agreements were signed in 2014 with the aim to give a further boost to trade and investments linkages. An ASEAN-India Centre has been set up in New Delhi to provide research-based policy inputs to the Government and the seventh edition of the Delhi Dialogue was hosted on 11-12 March 2015 to discuss how to take the ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership forward post 2015. India attaches highest priority to the development of bilateral relations with the members of ASEAN. Steps taken to strengthen bilateral cooperation include regular high level exchanges, conclusion of important agreements and MoUs, close political, security and counter-terrorism cooperation, enhanced economic engagement including conclusion of CECA/FTA, and cultural and people-to-people exchanges, leveraging our civilizational links.