

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
CULTURE  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3218  
ANSWERED ON:16.03.2015  
CULTURAL EXCHANGES WITH SAARC COUNTRIES AND PAKISTAN  
Senguttuvan Shri Balasubramaniam

**Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the Government continues to have cultural exchanges with all SAARC countries;
- (b) if so, whether the Government sends cultural troupes to Pakistan;
- (c) if so, the details of the cultural exchanges programmes that India had with Pakistan in the last two years;
- (d) whether artistes from Pakistan performed in India under the SAARC regional cooperation and cultural exchange treaty; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE FOR CULTURE AND TOURISM (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) AND MINISTER OF STATE, CIVIL AVIATION  
(Dr. MAHESH SHARMA)

(a) & (b) Yes, Sir.

(c), (d) & (e) -

(i) ICCR sponsored a 6-Member Flute group of Pandit Hari Prasad Chaurasia from 26-30 January, 2012 to Pakistan on the occasion of India's Republic Day.

(ii) A 6-member Ustad Naseeruddin Saami group from Pakistan visited India from 9th to 15th November, 2014 to perform in ICCR's Begum Akhtar Centenary celebrations on 10th October, 2014 at Azad Bhavan, New Delhi. Apart from Delhi, the group performed at Jaipur on 12th October, 2014.

(iii) A 5-member STRINGS Band group from Pakistan visited India from 28th November, to 1st December, 2013 to participate in the 7th South Asian Bands Festival, New Delhi, organized by MEA and ICCR.

(iv) A 5-member Zebunissa Bangash Band Group from Pakistan visited India from 6th to 9th November, 2014 to participate in the 8th South Asian Bands Festival, New Delhi, organized by MEA and ICCR.

It is worth mentioning that there is no formal Cultural Exchange Program between India and Pakistan. However, Pakistani artists have been performing in India from time to time to take part in various private initiatives. There have also been no performances under the 'SARRC Regional Cooperation and Cultural Exchange Treaty' by Pakistani artists in India in the recent times.'