

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3683

ANSWERED ON:12.08.2015

Special Diplomacy with SAARC Countries

Adhikari Shri Sisir Kumar;Godse Shri Hemant Tukaram;Pal Shri Jagdambika;Puttaraju Shri C.S.

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is contemplating any special diplomacy regarding relations with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries specifically with Pakistan;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether there have been any agreements between SAARC countries, especially Nepal to improve and increase trade, transport and movement of passengers within member countries in the past one year;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the efforts made by the Indian Government to lead talks to improve trade between member nations of SAARC and details thereof?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) India has enhanced its engagement with all SAARC countries both bilaterally and through the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). It has increased efforts for enhancing trade and connectivity links through land, air and sea for accelerating regional integration and greater people-to-people contacts. India continues its efforts to build peaceful cooperative ties with Pakistan to address the outstanding issues through peaceful bilateral dialogue.

(c) & (d) A sub-regional Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA) was signed between Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) on June 15, 2015 in Thimphu, Bhutan for the regulation of passenger, personal and cargo vehicular traffic between the four countries. This BBIN MVA will ease cross-border movement of goods, vehicles and people, thereby helping to expand people-to-people contact, trade and economic exchanges between them.

(e) South Asia is among the least integrated regions of the world with low levels of intra-regional trade. India is taking a lead role in all SAARC mechanisms working towards removal of trade barriers, tariff liberalization and liberalization of trade in services to improve trade among member nations of SAARC.
