

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:47
ANSWERED ON:09.07.2014
VISITS TO NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES
Adityanath Shri Yogi;Kodikunnil Shri Suresh

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether bilateral visits to Bhutan and Bangladesh were made recently;
- (b) if so, the details of discussions held and outcome thereof;
- (c) the details of the areas of cooperation/trade identified and Memoranda of Understanding signed during such visits; and
- (d) the extent to which the aforesaid visits are likely to help in boosting bilateral ties? ANSWER THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ)

(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. 47 REGARDING `VISITS TO NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES` FOR ANSWER ON 09.07.2014

(a) Yes Madam. At the invitation of His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, the King of Bhutan, Prime

Answer

THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ)

(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. 47 REGARDING `VISITS TO NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES` FOR ANSWER ON 09.07.2014

(a) Yes Madam. At the invitation of His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, the King of Bhutan, Prime Minister of India paid a State Visit to Bhutan from 15-16 June, 2014. External Affairs Minister visited Bangladesh from 25-27 June, 2014 at the invitation of the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, Mr. A.H. Mahmood Ali.

(b) & (c) During his visit to Bhutan, Prime Minister met with the King of Bhutan, the Fourth King and the Prime Minister of Bhutan. Their discussions covered all areas of bilateral cooperation including trade, economic cooperation and cultural, educational exchanges. Prime Minister also addressed the Joint Sitting of the Bhutanese Parliament, unveiled the Foundation Stone of the 600 MW Kholongchhu Hydropower Project, and inaugurated the new Supreme Court building which was constructed with GOI assistance.

During the visit, an India- Bhutan Joint Press Statement was issued. Prime Minister reaffirmed GOI's commitment towards Bhutan's XI Five Year Plan for 2013-18, announced the doubling of the Nehru- Wangchuck scholarship to Rs.2 crores per year and assistance for the establishment of E-library in all 20 districts of Bhutan. Prime Minister conveyed our decision to exempt Bhutan from any ban or quantitative restrictions on exports of following items: - Milk powder, Wheat, Edible oil, Pulses and Non-basmati rice.

During her visit to Bangladesh, EAM called on the President and Prime Minister of Bangladesh and held extensive discussions with the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh. EAM also met the leader of the opposition and leaders of various political parties as well as representatives of Chambers of Commerce, socio-cultural organizations and academic and media community. During the visit, the two sides discussed bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest and concern, including cooperation in border management, trade and investment, security, connectivity, power, infrastructure development etc.

(d) The visits helped further strengthen our close bonds of friendship and bilateral cooperation with Bhutan and Bangladesh.