

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:559
ANSWERED ON:26.11.2014
BHARAT NEPAL SHIKSHA MAITRI KARYAKARAM
Singh Shri Bhola

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the salient features of the Bharat-Nepal Shiksha Maitri Karyakaram launched recently;
- (b) whether such a programme is also in the pipeline in regard to Bhutan;
- (c) if so, the details thereof alongwith the list of universities under this programme with Nepal and Bhutan;
- (d) whether the 18th SAARC Summit is due to be held in Kathmandu, Nepal; and
- (e) if so, the areas envisaged for discussion by India at the said Summit?

Answer

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

(a) Bharat-Nepal Shiksha Maitri Karyakram was announced during the visit of Hon'ble Prime Minister to Nepal on 3-4 August, 2014. It envisages 4-6 week attachment programme for Undergraduate/Postgraduate students from Nepal in prestigious Indian Universities. The programme aims at promoting awareness on different facets of life in India and the progress made by the country in various fields and thereby, enhance their understanding of and engagement with contemporary India. The programme has been operationalized with the first batch of 20 students participating in a course at University of Calcutta in November 2014.

(b) & (c) Government of India offers around 260 slots to Bhutan and 250 slots to Nepal under its ITEC/Colombo Plan every year for short-term training in prestigious universities, scientific and technical training institutes of India. As regards degree courses, about 500 scholarships are awarded to Bhutan and about 600 to Nepal annually in different universities. The Nehru-Wangchuck Scholarship scheme and the Ambassador's Scholarship scheme in Bhutan have been doubled in 2014.

(d) & (e) The 18th SAARC Summit and its preceding meetings are scheduled to be held in Kathmandu, Nepal from November 22-27, 2014. The SAARC Meetings will hold discussions on the Agenda which is prepared by the SAARC Secretariat/host Government, which is Nepal.

Discussions will be held in all areas of cooperation agreed under the SAARC framework including strengthening of SAARC mechanisms, connectivity, agriculture, food security, rural development, energy, environment, poverty alleviation to trade and security issues. Bilateral issues are not raised at the SAARC Forum.