

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.609
TO BE ANSWERED ON 03.08.2011**

SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK:

SHRI K.J.S.P.REDDY:

SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN:

SHRI SURESH KUMAR SHETKAR:

SHRI E.G.SUGAVANAM:

SHRI S.S.RAMASUBBU:

SHRI P.VISWANATHAN:

SHRI BIBHU PRASAD TARAI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of visits by foreign dignitaries to India during the last four months till date;**
- (b) the details of issues on which deliberations were held with them including bilateral agreements/MoUs/treaties signed;**
- (c) the details of foreign visits undertaken by the Prime Minister as well as External Affairs Minister during the above period;**
- (d) the details of discussions held, agreements/MoUs/treaties signed and the outcome thereof; and**
- (e) the benefits that would accrue to the country as a result of signing the bilateral agreements/MoUs/treaties and the steps taken by the Government to further improve the relations with these countries ?**

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SMT. PRENEET KAUR)**

(a) Details of visits of foreign Heads of State, Vice Presidents, Heads of Government and External Affairs/Foreign Ministers from April to July 2011 are at ANNEXURE-I

(c) Details of visits of Hon'ble Prime Minister and Hon'ble External Affairs Minister from April to July 2011 are at ANNEXURE-II

(b), (d) & (e) Details are at ANNEXURE-III.

**Incoming visits of Heads of State, Vice Presidents, Heads of Government
and External Affairs/Foreign Ministers from April to July 2011**

S.No	Dignitary	Dates
1.	H.E. Mr. Abhisit Vejjajiva, Prime Minister of Thailand	05 April 2011
2.	H.E. Tr. Taib Fassi Fihri, Foreign Minister of Morocco to India	7 – 8 April, 2011
3.	H.E. Mr. Markos Kyprianou, Foreign Minister of Cyprus	17-19 April 2011
4.	H.E. Mr. Ahmed Naseem, Foreign Minister of Republic of Maldives	24 – 26 April, 2011
5.	H.E. Dr. Ossur Skarphedinsson, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland	25 April – 3 May, 2011
6.	H.E. Mr. Ali Ahmed Karti, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Sudan	26 – 28 April, 2011
7.	H.E. Professor G L Peiris, Minister of External Affairs of Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka	15 – 17 May, 2011
8.	H.E. Mr. Islam Karimov, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan	17 – 18 May, 2011
9.	H. E. Dr. Nabil Elaraby, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt	27 – 31 May, 2011
10.	H.E. Dr. Guido Westerwelle, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs and Vice Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany	29 – 30 May, 2011
11.	H.E. Dr. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany	31 May – 1 June, 2011
12.	H. E. Mr. Osman Saleh Mohammed, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea	6-8 th June, 2011
13.	H. E. Mr. Borut Pahor, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia	13-16 th June, 2011
14.	H. E. Marshal Mohammad Qasim Fahim, First Vice President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan	16-18 th June, 2011
15.	His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates	26-27 th June, 2011
16.	H. E. Mr. John Key, Prime Minister of New Zealand and Mrs. Bronagh Key	26-30 th June, 2011
17.	H. E. Prof. Dr. Uri Rosenthal, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands	July 4-6, 2011
18.	H. E. Mr. Radoslaw Sikorski, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland	July 11-12, 2011
19.	Her Excellency Hillary Rodham Clinton Secretary of State of the United State of America	July 18-21, 2011
20.	H. E. Mr. Abdul Ati-Al-Obeidi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Bureau of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	July 21-24,2011
21.	Her Excellency Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar, Foreign Minister of Islamic Republic of Pakistan	July 26-28, 2011

**Outgoing visits of Hon'ble Prime Minister and Hon'ble External Affairs Minister
from April to July 2011**

Sl.No.	Countries visit by Hon'ble Prime Minister	Dates
1.	China and Kazakhstan	12 – 15 April, 2011
2.	Afghanistan	12 – 13 May, 2011
3.	Ethiopia and Tanzania	23 – 28 May, 2011

Sl.No.	Countries visited by Hon'ble External Affairs Minister	Dates
1.	Nepal	20 – 22 April, 2011
2.	Malaysia	02-04 May, 2011
3.	Singapore	05 May, 2011
4.	Turkey	11-12 May, 2011
5.	Ethiopia/Tanzania/Kenya	22-28 May, 2011
6.	Italy/UK / Hungary	02-06 June, 2011
7.	Republic of Kazakhstan	14 – 15 th June, 2011
8.	Union of Myanmar	20 – 22 nd June, 2011
9.	UK	30 June – 01 July, 2011
10.	Bangladesh	06-08 July, 2011
11.	Indonesia	20-23 July, 2011
12.	Maldives	28-30 July, 2011

1. Thailand: Wide-ranging discussions on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues were held. The two Prime Ministers agreed upon the need to energize bilateral institutional mechanisms, to enhance cooperation in security matters and to upgrade the bilateral dialogue on defence matters. The two leaders stressed the significance of enhancing connectivity between the two countries and regions, and the importance of further enhancing bilateral trade and investment.

2. Morocco: The visit was to hold talks on bilateral issues as well as to brief India on the recent developments and constitutional and other reforms carried out by the King of Morocco.

3. Cyprus: Delegation-level talks were held during which bilateral matters and regional and international issues of mutual interest were discussed. No agreements were signed during the visit.

This high level visit strengthened the multifaceted and mutually beneficial bilateral relations between India and Cyprus. It also provided an occasion for reiteration by Cyprus of its extending support to India in an expanded United Nation's Security Council.

4. Maldives: The visit enabled a review of bilateral relations and discussions on the ways and means of further consolidating the existing close and friendly ties between the two countries.

5. Iceland: Issues related to bilateral ties as well as regional and international issues of common concern, including the reform of the United Nations Security Council were discussed. It was noted that there were many untapped opportunities for the business communities in the two countries to explore. Bilateral cooperation in the area of geothermal energy and fisheries were identified as areas of fruitful collaboration. Possibilities of cooperation in the area of Climate Change and Green Energy, and the potential of tourism cooperation between the two countries were also discussed. Cooperation in the area of renewable energy to exploit the potential for mini hydro power projects and geothermal energy was also discussed.

This high level visit strengthened the multifaceted and mutually beneficial bilateral relations between India and Iceland. It also provided an occasion for reiteration by Iceland of its extending support to India in an expanded United Nation's Security Council.

6. Sudan: Foreign Minister of Sudan visited India to discuss bilateral relations and issues related to the secession of South Sudan.

7. Sri Lanka: The two sides reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations. They assessed the developments that had taken place since the visit of the President of Sri Lanka to India in June, 2010 and the bilateral Joint Commission meeting at the level of the Ministers of External Affairs held in Colombo in November, 2010. Issues relating to regional and international issues of interest were also discussed. The two sides also discussed issues relating to the resettlement and rehabilitation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Indian assistance projects in Sri Lanka and issue of national reconciliation in Sri Lanka including political devolution.

8. Uzbekistan: The two sides reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations and exchanged views on important regional and international issues. They noted and welcomed a strong similarity of outlook on bilateral as well as a host of regional and global issues. Both countries declared that they had elevated the bilateral relationship to a level of a 'Strategic Partnership'.

The following statement/bilateral agreements/MoUs/treaties were issued/signed during the visit :

- (i) A Joint Statement on the strategic partnership between India and Uzbekistan.
- (ii) Memorandum of Cooperation on Program Development of Joint Scientific and Applied Researchers in Priority Fields between the Department of Science & Technology and the Committee for Coordination of S&T Development under the Cabinet of Ministers, Republic of Uzbekistan for the period 2012-2020.
- (iii) Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (Department of Information Technology) and the Communications and Information Agency of Uzbekistan for Cooperation in the field of Information Technology.
- (iv) MOU between the Ministry of Textiles and the Ministry of Foreign Economic Affairs, Investments and Trade for Cooperation in the Textile Sector.
- (v) Mutual Cooperation Agreement between National Small Industries Corporation, India and Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan.
- (vi) MOU between Open Joint Stock Company Uzbeko'mir (Uzbekcoal) and GAIL.
- (vii) MOU between Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan on Establishment of an India-Uzbekistan Entrepreneurship Development Centre.
- (viii) Agreement on Establishment of Joint Business Council between the FICCI and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan.
- (ix) MOU between ONGC Videsh Limited and Uzbekneftegaz on Cooperation in Hydrocarbon Sector.
- (x) Action plan of activities under the protocol between India Tourism Development Corporation and the Uzbek national company 'Uzbektourims'.
- (xi) MOU between the Bureau of Indian Standards and the Agency for Standardization, Metrology and Certification of Uzbekistan
- (xii) Agreement for Cooperation between Export Import Bank of India and National Bank for Foreign Economic Activity of the Republic of Uzbekistan.
- (xiii) MOU between Jamia Milia Islamia University and Al-Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies of Academy of Science of the Republic of Uzbekistan.
- (xiv) Protocol on introducing amendments and addenda into the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Government of India on avoidance of double taxation and preventing evasion from taxation of income and capital signed on July 29, 1993.

The visit marked a significant enhancement of our bilateral relationship. The enhancement of the engagement would bring several political, strategic and sectoral benefits to India.

9. Egypt : The Egyptian Foreign Minister visited India to brief the Indian leadership on the emerging and latest situation in Egypt in the light of the "Arab Spring".

10. & 11. Germany: During the visit of Chancellor Merkel discussions were held on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest. She was conferred the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding for the year 2009. The highlight of the visit was the first Indo-German Inter-Governmental Consultations. Under this format, which Germany follows only with a few select countries, Chancellor Merkel was accompanied by seven key Ministers of her Cabinet who held separate discussions with their Indian counterpart Ministers. Following their discussions, the Ministers from both the sides reported to Prime Minister and Chancellor Merkel during the delegation level talks.

During the visit, the following Agreements/MOUs were signed:

a. MOU on Cooperation in the field of vocational education and training between the Ministry of Labour and Employment of the Republic of India and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research of the Federal Republic of Germany.

b. MOU between Department of Science and Technology, India and Leibniz Society, Germany for organizing symposia on frontiers of science and technology.

c. MOU on Research Cooperation between the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Helmholtz Association of National Research Centres, Germany.

d. Cooperation Agreement between Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics, India and Deutsches Elektronen-Synchotron (DESY), Germany.

The Agreements/MOUs signed during the visit of the German Chancellor will further enhance cooperation in important areas of vocational education and training, science and technology and research between India and Germany.

The Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany visited India to hold Inter-Governmental Consultations with EAM as part of German Chancellor's visit to India. Discussions between the Ministers focused on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest. No Agreements/MOUs were signed during the visit.

12. Eritrea: The visiting dignitary welcomed India's reemergence as a major economic, political and technological power. He also commended India's institutionalized engagement with African partners through the consensual, consultative and responsive mechanism put in place under the rubric of India Africa Forum Summit. Eritrea offered unqualified support for India's candidature for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, as India deserved this.

13. Slovenia: The entire gamut of bilateral relations, regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest were discussed including global issues like reform of the UN Security Council, the global financial situation and international terrorism.

The following Agreement/MOUs were signed :

- (i) Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPPA);
- (ii) MoU between the Indian Bureau of Indian Standards and its Slovenian counterpart, which is expected to boost bilateral trade by facilitating a better mutual understanding of standards and norms of traded goods.
- (iii) MoU between the University of Nova Gorica and the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore to promote institutional cooperation in the field of research & education.

This high level visit strengthened the multifaceted and mutually beneficial bilateral relations between India and Slovenia. It also provided an occasion for reiteration by Slovenia of its extending support to India in an expanded United Nation's Security Council.

14. Afghanistan: The visit carried forward the sequence of high-level interaction between the two countries and contributed to strengthening the strategic partnership between India and Afghanistan. The visit provided an opportunity for both sides to discuss bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest, and for India to express its firm commitment and support to the Government and people of Afghanistan as they build a peaceful, democratic, pluralistic and prosperous Afghanistan.

15. UAE: Both sides reviewed the current state of bilateral relations and discussed recent regional developments of mutual concern. A bilateral MOU on periodic Political Consultations between the two Foreign Offices was signed.

The visit served to strengthen the comprehensive partnership between India and UAE. Both sides agreed on the need to enhance the level of relations by focussing on specific and mutually beneficial areas of bilateral cooperation.

16. New Zealand: Bilateral, regional, international and economic issues of mutual interest were discussed. During the discussions, the two Prime Ministers acknowledged the strength of the ties, welcomed the increased trade and investment flows between India and New Zealand and noted the potential to expand bilateral trade significantly.

An Agreement on Audio-Visual Co-Productions and a Protocol for Cooperation on Science and Innovation between India and New Zealand were signed during the visit.

The Agreement on Audio-Visual co-productions will allow both sides to encourage industry level cooperation, share creative talent, and support the vibrant film industry in both countries. The Protocol for Cooperation on Science and Innovation will provide a framework for future scientific exchanges and research collaboration.

17. Netherlands: Extensive discussions on a wide range of bilateral, regional and international issues were held. The visiting dignitary expressed Netherlands' support for India's permanent membership in an expanded UN Security Council, besides also endorsing efforts of G4 towards the said objective. Views were also exchanged on the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan, West Asia and North African region, global financial architecture as well as UN reforms.

18. Poland: In depth discussions were held on bilateral, regional and international issues of common concern. It was agreed to expand and deepen the broad-based bilateral cooperation including people-to-people exchanges and investments. It was agreed that an Agreement for visa exemption for diplomatic passport holder would be concluded at the earliest and efforts made to speed up negotiations of all other pending agreements.

This high level visit strengthened the multifaceted and mutually beneficial bilateral relations between India and Poland. It also provided an occasion for reiteration by Poland of its extending support to India in an expanded United Nation's Security Council.

19. Unites States of America: The second round of the India-US Strategic Dialogue, held in New Delhi on 19 July 2011, provided an opportunity to reaffirm the India-US global strategic partnership. Both sides discussed further expansion of cooperation across full spectrum of bilateral relations and strengthening of mutual understanding on global and regional issues of interest.

The two governments signed the Bilateral Aviation Safety Agreement (BASA), the Memorandum of Understanding between Computer Emergency Response Teams of India and US (CERT-IN and US-CERT) and an Implementing Agreement on Discovery Science.

20. Libya : The Foreign Minister visited India to brief on the prevailing situation in Libya and sought India's assistance for resolution of the Libyan crisis.

21. Pakistan: The talks were held in a candid, cordial and constructive atmosphere. The status of bilateral relations were reviewed, satisfaction on the holding of various secretary level meetings expressed and the importance of carrying forward the dialogue process with a view to resolving peacefully all outstanding issues through constructive and result oriented

engagement were affirmed. It was also agreed that terrorism poses a continuing threat to peace and security and the firm and undiluted commitment of the two countries to fight and eliminate this scourge in all its forms and manifestations reiterated. Both sides agreed on the need to strengthen cooperation on counter-terrorism including among relevant departments as well as agencies to bring those responsible for terror crimes to justice. The two sides also decided to resume the work of the India-Pakistan Joint Commission and agreed that the Technical Level Working Groups should hold their meetings to identify avenues of further cooperation in these fields. It was also decided that the Foreign Ministers will meet again in Islamabad in the first half of 2012 to review progress in the dialogue process. The Ministers agreed to the continuation of the dialogue process and to the convening series of Secretaries level meetings

Prime Minister's visits.

1.1 China: At the 3rd BRICS [Brazil, Russia, India, China & South Africa] Summit held in Sanya on 14 April 2011, the leaders exchanged views on international situation; international economic and financial issues including reform of international monetary system and commodity price volatility; development issues covering climate change, sustainable development, MDGs and WTO Doha Round; and cooperation amongst BRICS countries.

Outcome of the BRICS Summit was Sanya Declaration, a Framework Agreement on Financial Cooperation within the BRICS Inter-Bank Cooperation Mechanism and an MoU on Establishment of Long-term Business Contact Point. The leaders also endorsed an Action Plan to deepen and broaden cooperation among BRICS countries in areas of security, agriculture, health, science & technology, green economy, business links, culture and sports.

Sanya Declaration issued at the Summit *inter alia* reaffirmed the need for a comprehensive reform of the UN including its Security Council with a view to making it more effective, efficient and responsive so that it can deal with global challenges more successfully. BRICS countries expressed their determination to strengthen cooperation in countering terrorism.

The Framework Agreement on Financial Cooperation within the BRICS Inter-Bank Cooperation Mechanism was signed in Sanya on 14 April 2011. EXIM Bank signed the Agreement from Indian side. The Agreement envisages grant of credit lines in local currencies and cooperation in capital markets and other financial services, treasury transactions and issuing local currency bonds in BRICS markets.

FICCI signed an MoU with other BRICS partners on Establishment of Long-term Business Contact Point. The MoU envisages setting up of a Secretariat in FICCI to coordinate BRICS Business Forum related activities in future.

The Framework Agreement on Financial Cooperation within the BRICS Inter-Bank Cooperation Mechanism and the MoU on Establishment of Long-term Business Contact Point signed during the BRICS Summit in Sanya Summit are expected to promote intra-BRICS trade and investments.

1.2 Kazakhstan: Bilateral relations and other issues of mutual concern were discussed. A Joint Statement was issued after the visit.

The following agreements/MOUs were signed during the visit :

- (i) Package of three Agreements between ONGC Videsh Ltd., and the National Company "Kazumunaigas" on Satpayev Exploration Block :

- (a) Participating Share Assignment Agreement
- (b) Carry Agreement
- (c) Joint Operating Agreement.
- (ii) Agreement for cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy
- (iii) Joint Action Plan for furthering the Strategic Partnership for the period of 2011-2014.
- (iv) MON between Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-IN), Department of Information Technology and Kazakhstan Computer Emergency Response Team.
- (v) Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Civil Matters.
- (vi) Agreement between the Ministry of Agriculture of India and the Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan in the field of agriculture and allied sectors.
- (vii) Agreement between the Ministry of Health of India and the Ministry of Health of Kazakhstan on cooperation in the field of healthcare.

2. Afghanistan: PM's landmark visit to Kabul underlined our strong and undiluted commitment to assisting the Government and people of Afghanistan as they build a stable, peaceful, prosperous and democratic country.

As a manifestation of our deep and abiding commitment to Afghanistan, PM announced an additional assistance package of USD 500 million over and above the current level of our commitment of around USD 1.5 billion. The joint declaration issued during the visit encapsulated the multi faceted ties between the two countries and laid down the trajectory of the unique strategic partnership that we seek to build.

3.1 Ethiopia: Prime Minister led a delegation to participate in second Africa India Forum Summit (AIFS-II) in Addis Ababa from 24-25 May 2011. The theme of the Summit was "Enhanced Partnership and Shared Vision" and also paid a bilateral visit to Ethiopia.

Two documents, the Addis Ababa Declaration and the Africa India Framework for Enhanced Cooperation adopted at the end of the Summit will now guide our systematic enhanced engagement with Africa in the coming years. The Addis Ababa Declaration is a political document that covering issues of bilateral, regional and international interest to India and Africa, including our common position on UN reforms, climate change, WTO, international terrorism etc. The Africa India Framework for Enhanced Cooperation spells out the agreed area of cooperation, including human resources and institutional capacity building, education, science & technology, agricultural productivity and food security, industrial growth, including small & medium enterprises and minerals, development of the health sector, development of infrastructure, ICT and the establishment of judicial systems with police and defence establishments under civilian control.

At the Summit, Prime Minister announced many new initiatives to further strengthen our cooperation with Africa. He made several announcements for the next three years, including the availability of Lines of Credit of US\$5 billion; a Line of Credit of US\$300 million for new Ethio-Djibouti railway line; more than 22,000 scholarships to Africa over the period of next three years; and establishment of more than 80 capacity building institutions in Africa.

This was the first ever visit by any Indian Prime Minister to Ethiopia. During the visit, Prime Minister held talks with his Ethiopian counterpart and also addressed the Ethiopian Parliament. A Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement and Agreement for Cooperation in Small and Medium Enterprises were also signed with Ethiopia during the visit. The agreements will help both the countries in the area of investments and enhance cooperation in medium and small scale enterprises.

3.2 Tanzania: India-Tanzania bilateral relations and ways and means to enhance and deepen them were reviewed. The Centre of Excellence in ICT at the Dar es Salaam Institute of

Technology, which has been set up by India under grant through CDAC was inaugurated. Prime Minister announced an LOC of US\$ 180 million for water supply projects and a grant of US\$ 10 million for projects in the social and educational sectors for Tanzania, and a vocational training centre and a grant of US\$ 100,000/- for laboratory equipment for schools for Zanzibar.

The following agreements/MOUs were signed:

- i. Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion
- ii. Joint Action Plan between NSIC India and Small Industries Development Organization (SIDO), Tanzania.
- iii. Between Apollo Group and Health Ministry of Tanzania for the setting up of a super specialty hospital in Tanzania

External Affairs Minister's visits

1. Nepal : The Nepalese leadership briefed about the efforts being made towards completing the peace process and drafting of the new Constitution in Nepal. It was conveyed to the leadership of Nepal that India is committed to working with the people of Nepal for a democratic, stable, peaceful and prosperous Nepal. Discussions were held on all aspects of bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest. These helped to further strengthen and expand our relations and open more avenues for mutual cooperation. During the visit, EAM visited Birgunj and laid the foundation stone of the Terai Roads Project and of the Integrated Check Post which are being constructed with Indian assistance.

2. Malaysia : EAM co-chaired the meeting along with the Malaysian Minister of Foreign Affairs. The two sides discussed bilateral issues and multilateral issues of mutual interest.

The visit will help further strengthen bilateral relations and strategic partnership between India and Malaysia.

3. Singapore: Visit on the occasion of the celebrations to mark the 150th Birth Anniversary of the Nobel Laureate. A bust of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, on behalf of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations was presented to the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) and the Indian Heritage Centre, Singapore.

The visit will help further cement cultural relations between India and Singapore.

4. Turkey: India's participation in the Fourth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries (UNLDC-IV) contributed to strengthening of India's relations with the Least Developed Countries and helped to convey India's high level political commitment to their development.

5.1 Ethiopia: The visit was to finalize the documents related to Second Africa-India Forum Summit. EAM was part of the Prime Minister's delegation for the AIFS-II and bilateral visit to Ethiopia.

5.2 Tanzania: EAM visited Tanzania as part of PM's delegation and participated in official meetings.

5.3 Kenya: Issues of bilateral relations of matters of mutual interest were discussed. He also met NRIs/PIOs.

6.1 Italy: A wide range of international and bilateral issues of mutual interest were discussed, including increasing the economic cooperation between the two countries and Investment by Italy in India's rapidly growing economy.

6.2 UK: Wide-ranging discussions that covered the entire gamut of India-UK bilateral relations and other matters of mutual interest were held. The progress in 'Enhanced Partnership' since the visit of UK Prime Minister to India last year and ways to further develop closer and stronger partnership were also discussed.

6.3 Hungary: ASEM Foreign Ministers discussed regional and international issues of common interest, non-traditional security challenges and global issues. ASEM is an Asia-Europe forum comprising 46 Asian and European countries, in addition to the two international organizations ASEAN and EU, for exchanging views on an array of subjects. External Affairs Minister announced India's offer to host the next meeting of the ASEM Foreign Ministers in 2013 in Delhi.

At a meeting with Hungarian Prime Minister, the bilateral relations were reviewed. The meeting would contribute to strengthening of the multifaceted bilateral cooperation with Hungary.

7. Kazakhstan: India is an Observer in the SCO Summit. No specific agreement was signed at the Summit. However, the member countries approved the 'Memorandum of Obligations' and issued Astana Declaration. The Astana Summit approved the Memorandum of Obligation of applicant countries for SCO membership. The Summit opened the doors for new members of the SCO. India is in the process of studying the legal implications of the Memorandum and other SCO related documents. India's association with the SCO has brought India several benefits in terms of security and economic cooperation in the SCO space.

8. Myanmar: The entire gamut of bilateral relations was discussed including the activities of Indian insurgent groups along the Indo-Myanmar border, implementation of various infrastructure projects, border management etc. Both sides agreed to further strengthen the close cooperation between the security forces of the two countries. The status of various projects being executed in Myanmar with Government of India assistance was reviewed. These are broadly in areas like infrastructure, capacity building, health, humanitarian, agriculture, hydroelectric power projects, developing connectivity etc. Government of India is undertaking various projects to develop roads/multi modal transit transport system designed to link North East to Myanmar.

This was our first high level engagement with the new government in Myanmar, since it assumed office on March 30, 2011. During the visit, External Affairs Minister extended an invitation from the President of India to President U Thein Sein to visit India. He also offered to receive visits of parliamentary delegations from Myanmar to share our experience in parliamentary procedures and management of Centre-State relations. An MOU on setting up India- Myanmar Industrial Training Centre in Myingyan, Myanmar was signed.

The visit provided a useful opportunity to engage with the new leadership and strengthen our bilateral ties in a new political environment. External Affairs Minister and the Myanmar Minister of Commerce jointly inaugurated three of the ten Rice Silos which were built with Government of India assistance, following the devastation of Cyclone Nargis in 2008. He also handed over the cheque for India's assistance towards relief and rehabilitation in earthquake affected Shan State (*in March 2011*) which has been used for constructing six schools buildings in Shan State. Myanmar side was appreciative of Indian assistance during times of need.

9. UK: held wide-ranging discussions that covered the entire gamut of India–UK bilateral relations and other matters of mutual interest. The progress in ‘Enhanced Partnership’ since the visit of UK Prime Minister to India last year and ways to further develop closer and stronger partnership were also discussed.

10. Bangladesh: Extensive discussions on entire gamut of bilateral relations were held. The two sides signed the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the entry of trucks from Bhutan inside the Bangladesh territory. The signing of SOP would facilitate trade between Bhutan and Bangladesh and is in implementation of the Joint Communiqué issued during the visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to India in January 2010. The two sides also signed a Protocol on Exchange of Instruments of Ratification in respect of the Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement, which would facilitate bilateral investments between the two countries.

11. Indonesia: At the 9th ASEAN-India Post Ministerial Meeting in Bali, Indonesia on July 22, 2011, the Ministers agreed to further strengthen the ASEAN-India Dialogue Partnership. There was unanimity that India and ASEAN could strengthen regional efforts to face trans-national security threats. The Ministers were hopeful of meeting the target of US\$ 70 billion for India-ASEAN trade by 2012. ASEAN countries said they looked forward to the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit to be hosted by India in December 2012.

The EAS Foreign Ministers Consultations on July 22, 2011 reviewed the evolution of EAS as one of the most important mechanisms for enhancing international cooperation in Asia. The Ministers shared the view that the East Asia region comprises some of the most dynamic economies and emerging powers in the world. EAS Foreign Ministers, *inter alia*, outlined their interest in the revival of Nalanda University as an icon of Asian renaissance. They emphasized the significance of effective disaster management in the region in view of the particular geo-climatic conditions of the Asia-Pacific. They also called for cooperation to combat maritime issues of security and safety.

12. Maldives: The visit provided an opportunity for the two sides to discuss the entire gamut of bilateral issues as well as regional and international issues of mutual interest. The External Affairs Minister also offered India’s support to Maldives in its preparations for the XVII SAARC Summit to be held in Maldives in November 2011.
