

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 408
TO BE ANSWERED ON 24.02. 2010**

VISIT OF FOREIGN DIGINITARIES TO INDIA

**408 . SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI:
SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA:
SHRI BAIJAYANT JAY PANDA:
SHRI RUDRA MADHAB RAY:
SHRI PRABODH PANDA:
SHRI SHARAD YADAV:
SHRI NITYANANDA PRADHAN:
SHRI SARDAR SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA:
SHRI SURESH KUMAR SHETKAR:
SHRI S.S.RAMASUBBU:
SHRI HANSRAJ G.AHIR:
SHRI E.G.SUGAVANAM:**

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

- (a) the details of the visits by foreign dignitaries to India during the last four months till date;**
- (b) the issues discussed and bilateral agreements/MoUs signed during their visits;**
- (c) the details of visits undertaken by the Prime Minister as well as External Affairs Minister abroad during the above period;**
- (d) the details of discussions held by them and the outcome thereof; and**
- (e) the benefits likely to accrue as a result of these visits ?**

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI S.M. KRISHNA)**

- (a) The details of the visits by Heads of State/Government, Vice Presidents, Foreign Minister and equivalent level to India during the last four months are at Annexure – I.**
- (b), (d) & (e) Information is at Annexure-II.**
- (c) The details of visits undertaken by the Prime Minister as well as External Affairs Minister abroad during the above period is at Annexure-III**

ANNEXURE - I

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (E) OF
LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.408 REGARDING
VISIT OF FOREIGN DIGNITARIES TO INDIA**

Details of Visits from October 2009 to February 17, 2010

State Visits by Head of State/Government and equivalent level:

S No	Dignitary	Dates
1.	H.E Dr. Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, President of Argentina	October 13-15, 2009
2.	H M Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk, King of Bhutan	December 21-26, 2009
3.	H E Mrs. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh	January 10-14, 2010
4.	H E Dr. Olafur Ragnar Grimsson, President of Iceland	January 11-17, 2010
5.	H E Dato Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak, Prime Minsiter of Malaysia	January 19-23, 2010
6.	H E Mr. Lee Myung-bak, President of Republic of Korea	January 24-27, 2010
7.	H.E. Mr. Horst Kohler, President of Germany	February 1-7, 2010
8.	H.e. Mr. Abdullah Gl, President of Turkey	February 7-12, 2010
9.	H.E. Dr. Ram Baran Yadav, President of Nepal	February 15-18, 2010

Official/Working visits by Head of State/Government/Vice President and equivalent level

1.	H.E Mr. Fredrik Reinfeldt, PM of Sweden – India EU Summit	November 5-7, 2009
2.	H E Mr. Jose Manuel Barroso, President of European Commission – India EU Summit	November 6-8, 2009
3.	H E Mr. Kevin Rudd, PM of Australia	November 11-13, 2009
4.	HRH Prince Felipe of Austurias, Crown Prince of Spain	November 10-12, 2009
5.	H E Mr. Stephen Harper, PM of Canada	November 15-18, 2009
6.	H E Mr. Yukio Hatoyama, Prime Minsiter of Japan	December 27-29, 2009
7.	H.E. Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of Palestinian National Authority	February 11-12, 2010

Official visits by Foreign Minister and equivalent level

	H E Mr. Alexis Thambwe Mwamba, Foreign Minister of Congo	October 27-30, 2009
	H E Mr. Sergey Sobyenin, Deputy Chairman of the Government of Russian Federation	November 8-12, 2009
	H E Mr. Jaime Bermudez Merizalde, Foreign Minister of Colombia	November 9-11, 2009
	H.E. Mrs. Maite Nkoana Mashabane, Minister for International Relations of South Africa	November 12-16, 2009
	H E Mr. Manochheer Mottaki, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran	November 16-17, 2009
	H E Mr. Jose Brito, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cape Verde	November 18-22, 2009
	H E Mr. Carlos Tini, Foreign Minister of Sao Tome and Principe	November 29 to December 2, 2009
	H E Mr. Vygaudas Usackas, Foreign Minister of Lithuania	December 2-5
	H E Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, Minister Mentor of Singapore	December 14-17, 2009
	H E Mr. Kasit Piromya, Foreign Minister of Thailand	December 22-27, 2009
	H E Dr. Tonia Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Malta	January 6-11, 2010
	H E Dr. Peter Baltazs, Foreign Minister of Hungary	January 17-21, 2010
	H.E. Lyonpo Ugyen Tshering, Foreign Minister of Bhutan	January 27-February 1, 2010
	H.E. Dr. Thong Loun Sisoulith, Foreign Minister and DPM of People's Democratic Republic of Lao	January 31- February 3, 2010
	H.E. Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Mohamed Al Khalifa, Foreign Minister of Bahrain	February 10-12, 2010
	H.E. Mr. Sergey S. Sobyenin, Deputy Chairman of the Government of Russia	February 14-16, 2010

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VISIT OF FOREIGN DIGNITARIES TO INDIA**

Afghanistan

External Affairs Minister (EAM) represented India at the Inauguration Ceremony of President Hamid Karzai as President of Afghanistan for a fresh term in office on November 19, 2009. EAM's presence at the Inauguration Ceremony was a reflection of the close and friendly relations between the two countries.

EAM led the Indian delegation for the International Conference on Afghanistan that was held in London on January 28, 2010. The London Conference had three broad agenda items: security; development and governance; and regional cooperation. The Conference was co-hosted by Afghan President Hamid Karzai, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown. Over 60 countries, along with representatives of certain international organizations, were invited to the Conference. In the Communiqué issued after the Conference, the international community underlined its support for the Government of Afghanistan and its security, development and governance, and pledged to maintain its long-term commitment to Afghanistan.

Argentina

President of Argentina Dr. Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner visited India from Oct.13-15,2009. Bilateral, regional and multilateral issues were discussed.

Nine agreements /MoUs were signed during the visit. These are

- (i) Exchange of letters for issue of 5 year Multiple Entry Gratis Business visa
- (ii) MoU on Science & Technical Cooperation Programme for 2009-11
- (iii) ONGC Videsh Ltd. And ENARSA
- (iv) Sports Cooperation,
- (v) INTI and NRDC
- (vi) Trade Promotion and Tech. transfer in International Trade
- (vii) Agreement between CONICET, Argentina and CSIR of India
- (viii) Coop. In geological survey
- (ix) Agreement on outer space

An Agreement for cooperation in the peaceful uses of Nuclear energy was initialled.

PM and Argentine President held extensive talks on bilateral, regional and global issues. The principal focus was on developing economic and commercial linkage over wide area including agriculture and agro industry, mining and hydrocarbons. A bilateral Trade target of US\$ 3 billion was set for 2012. Cooperation in Science & Technology including biotechnology was discussed.

This was the first Presidential visit from Argentina in 15 years and provided an opportunity to renew and carry forward India-Argentina relations to a higher level. The Exchange of letters for issue of 5 year Multiple Entry Gratis Business visas has already been implemented by both sides and businessmen of both countries are already benefitting from it.

Australia

H.E. Mr. Kevin Rudd, Prime Minister of Australia visited India from Nov., 11-13, 2009. Bilateral, regional, international and economic issues of mutual interest were discussed during the visit. A Memorandum of Understanding on Water Resources Management was signed. A Joint Statement and a Joint Security Declaration were issued.

During the discussions views were exchanged on bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest. Our PM conveyed our concerns to Australian Prime Minister about the safety, security and well being of our students and Indian community in Australia

The visit of Australian Prime Minister has further strengthened the bilateral relationship. Building upon the significant expansion of our relations in recent years, the two Prime Ministers upgraded the relationship to a strategic partnership and affirmed their desire to intensify their contacts with each other. They emphasized the need to reinvigorate bilateral parliamentary exchanges and welcome the proposal to establish a new Young Political Leaders Exchange Programme

H.E. Mr. Stephen Smith, Foreign Minister of Australia visited India from Oct. 12-16, 2009. During the visit bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest were discussed.

A Joint Statement was issued.

During the discussions, EAM conveyed our concerns to Australian Foreign Minister about the safety, security and well being of our students and Indian community in Australia.

The visit resulted in deepening and diversification of bilateral relations in various sectors.

Bahrain

The Bahraini Foreign Minister met External Affairs Minister and had delegation level talks on issues of regional and global importance concerning the two countries. The Foreign Minister also called on Prime Minister, Minister of State for External Affairs, Dr. Shashi Tharoor, and National Security Adviser, Shri S.S. Menon. The visit of Bahraini Foreign Minister reinforced and further strengthened the excellent relationship between the two countries. However, no agreement was signed between the two countries during the visit of Bahraini Foreign Minister.

Bangladesh

During the visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh, the following agreements/MOUs were signed:

- i) Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance on Criminal Matters
- ii) Agreement on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons
- iii) Agreement on Combating International Terrorism, Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking
- iv) Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Power Sector
- v) Cultural Exchange Programme

Both sides issued a Joint Communiqué outlining areas of bilateral cooperation. India sought Bangladesh's cooperation against Indian insurgent groups using Bangladesh territory. Bangladesh Government assured India of its cooperation in this regard. India also announced US\$ 1 billion Line of Credit for infrastructural development projects in Bangladesh, including railway infrastructure, coaches and locomotives, buses and the dredging sector. Issues relating to water resources, land and maritime boundary were discussed. Connectivity was also discussed and both sides agreed to designate Ashuganj in Bangladesh and Silghat in India as new Ports of Call. Bangladesh agreed to give India access to Chittagong and Mongla ports. India would extend grant to construct Akhaura-Agartala railway link. India agreed to extend transit facility to Bangladesh for access to Nepal and to Bhutan by rail and road. Both sides agreed to operationalize land customs stations and border haats. Both sides agreed to jointly celebrate the 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore in 2011. The visit was significant one and helped in strengthening our links with Bangladesh and bringing the two countries closer.

Bhutan

During the visit of the King of Bhutan, the two sides exchanged views and held discussions on bilateral relations and economic cooperation as well as regional and international issues. Twelve Agreements/MOUs were signed between the two countries as per details given below:

- MOU between the Government of the Republic of India and the Royal Government of Bhutan on Drug Demand Reduction and Prevention of

Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursor Chemicals and Related Matters.

- MOU between the Government of the Republic of India and Royal Government of Bhutan on the Development of the Bhutan Institute of Medical Sciences at Thimphu (Bhutan).
- Air Services Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Royal Government of Bhutan
- MOU between the Royal Government of Bhutan and the Government of the Republic of India for the Development of Information and Communication Technology of Bhutan.
- MOU between the Government of India and the Royal Government of Bhutan on Harmonization of Seed Quality Testing and Standards for SAARC countries.
- Arrangement between the Royal Government of Bhutan and the Government of India for the Cooperation on Search and Rescue Services.
- MOU for Technical Assistance to the National Environment Commission Secretariat of the Royal Government of Bhutan
- MOU between the Department of Energy, Ministry of Economic Affairs of the Royal Government of Bhutan and Central Electricity Authority, Ministry of Power of the Government of India regarding Consultancy Services for Preparation of National Transmission Grid Master Plan for Bhutan.
- Agreement between the Department of Energy, Royal Government of Bhutan and NHPC Limited for the preparation of Detailed Project Report for Chamkharchhu-I Hydroelectric Project in Bhutan.
- Agreement between the Department of Energy, Royal Government of Bhutan and NHPC Limited for the Preparation of Detailed Project Report for Kuri-Gongri Hydroelectric Project in Bhutan.
- Agreement between the Department of Energy, Royal Government of Bhutan and NTPC Limited for the Preparation of Detailed Project Report for Amochhu Reservoir Hydroelectric Project in Bhutan.
- Agreement between the Department of Energy, Royal Government of Bhutan and SJVN Limited for the Preparation of Detailed Project Report for Kholongchhu Hydroelectric Project (486 MW) in Bhutan.

The Foreign Minister of Bhutan visited India to deliver invitation for the SAARC Summit to be held in Thimpu in April 2010.

During the visit of the King of Bhutan, apart from discussions on Government of India assisted projects and programmes for the 10th Five Year Plan of Bhutan as well as other projects and activities outside the Plan, it was agreed to work closely to conclude the Implementation Agreements for Mangdechhu and Punatshangchhu II hydroelectric projects. Both countries also agreed to conclude the Memorandum of Understanding for the establishment of the Golden Jubilee Rail Line. India agreed to work closely with Bhutan to ensure success of the first SAARC Summit in Thimpu in April 2010.

The visit of the King of Bhutan to India marked an important milestone in the close and friendly relations between the two countries, which contributed significantly towards further strengthening the profound friendship, mutual understanding, trust and cooperation between India and Bhutan.

Cape Verde

H.E. Mr. Jose Brito Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Communities of the Republic of Cape Verde, visited India from Nov. 18-22, 2009. Official talks on bilateral and multilateral issues held with Minister of State for External Affairs outlined ways and means of further expanding and strengthening the bilateral economic relations between the two countries. Protocol on Foreign Office Consultations was signed. Cape Verde promised to support India's candidature for non-Permanent seat on the UN Security Council for the years 2011-2012. India offered a US\$5 million Line of Credit for setting up a Technological Park besides Rs.10 million grant for meeting requirements in the education sector. One IT Centre of Excellence is also proposed to be set up in Cape Verde.

Colombia

Foreign Minister, Mr. Jaime Bermudez Merizalde visited India from Nov 10-11, 2009. The discussions were on enhancing bilateral relations.

Two Agreements/MoUs were signed:

- i) MOU on cooperation in the area of Bamboo application,
- (ii) Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement(BIPPA)

Both sides discussed ways and means to enhance and diversify bilateral relations further. There was special focus in the discussions on India-Colombia cooperation in mining , S&T and space. The visit served to review bilateral relations between India and Colombia and discuss ways and means to further strengthen the relations. The agreements signed during the visit will enhance economic and commercial bilateral engagement between India and Colombia

Congo

H.E. Mr. Alexis Thambwe Mwamba, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Democratic Republic of the Congo, visited India from Oct. 27-30, 2009. Official talks on matters of bilateral, regional and multilateral interest were held with External Affairs Minister at which time US\$263 million worth GOI Lines of Credit for projects in power, railway sectors in DR Congo were announced. India offered to set up one IT Centre of Excellence and three working stations under the Hole-in-the-Wall Project, in DR Congo and also train Congolese women in solar electrification and water harvesting courses in the Barefoot College, Rajasthan. Cultural Cooperation Agreement was signed. Congolese side offered cooperation in the field of exploration of minerals including uranium and diamond in DR Congo. The Congolese side

conveyed its support for India's Permanent Membership in the UN Security Council as also for the Non-permanent Seat for the years 2011-2012.

Cyprus

Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil, Hon'ble President of India, accompanied by Smt. D. Purandeswari, Hon'ble Minister of State for HRD paid a State visit to Cyprus from 29 - 31 October 2009. The entire gamut of bilateral relations was discussed. While India reiterated its long-standing support to the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Cyprus, President Demetris Christofias reiterated Cyprus' support to India's candidature for permanent seat in the UNSC. President Patil also delivered a key-note address at the India Business Forum.

European Union

The Tenth India-European Union Summit was held in New Delhi on 6 November 2009. The Indian delegation was led by Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh. The EU side was represented by Mr Fredrik Reinfeldt, Prime Minister of Sweden, in his capacity as President of the Council of the European Union, and Mr. Jose Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission. At the delegation level talks both sides reviewed bilateral relations in the context of the India-EU Strategic Partnership. A Joint Statement was also issued. The Agreement for Cooperation in the field of Fusion Energy Research was signed between Government of India and the European Atomic Community.

There was an exchange of views on issues of mutual concern. Both sides also discussed multilateral issues. The Agreement for Cooperation in the field of Fusion Energy Research envisages cooperation and research in the field of fusion energy technology.

Germany

Dr. Horst Koehler, German Federal President during his visit to India from February 1-7, 2010 held talks with the Prime Minister and also met Hon'ble President and Vice- President of India. External Affairs Minister, the Leader of Opposition and the Chairperson, UPA called on the German President. President's Koehler's discussions with the Indian leadership focused on bilateral, regional and global issues such as fight against terrorism and global financial crisis. No Agreements/MOUs were signed during the visit.

Both sides decided to further strengthen their existing relationship. The two sides decided to explore the possibilities for constructive cooperation in areas such as Infrastructure, energy efficiency technologies, renewables (especially solar energy), education and vocational training etc.

Hungary

Hungarian Foreign Minister, Dr. Peter Balazs, visited India from 17 - 21 January 2010. The visiting dignitary has bilateral talks with EAM during which the two sides discussed bilateral and multilateral issues. No agreement or MoU was signed during the visit. The two sides stressed on the need to strengthen bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, IT, pharmaceuticals, auto-components, energy, defence & security, S&T, agriculture sectors and also in consular and cultural matters, including sports. There were also discussions about Civil Nuclear Energy cooperation. Hungary is the current Chair of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

Iceland

President of Iceland, H.E. Dr. Olafur Ragnar Grimsson and First Lady, Mrs. Dorrit Moussaieff were on a State visit to India from January 11-17, 2010. He was accompanied by a 20-member strong business delegation of prominent Icelandic companies. President Grimsson was also conferred the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding for the year 2007 by Rashtrapatiji. Prime Minister and President Grimsson discussed bilateral and international issues, including cooperation in the field of geo-thermal energy, IT, carbon sequestration and recycling, glaciological studies, earthquake prediction and, oil exploration by Indian companies of Iceland's coast. The two sides also signed Air Service Agreement and, Cultural Exchange Programme for 2010-12.

Iran

Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki visited India on November 16-17, 2009. During the visit he called on the Hon'ble Vice President and the Prime Minister. He met with External Affairs Minister (EAM) and held delegation level talks covering a wide range of bilateral, multilateral and regional issues, including the threat of terrorism confronting the two countries. Among the topics discussed were cooperation projects in the fields of oil and gas, power, surface transport and infrastructure, including the Chabahar Port and the International North South Corridor. It was agreed that an Indian cultural centre would be set up in Tehran, and an Indian cultural week held in Tehran and Shiraz in 2010.

Japan

Prime Minister Dr. Yukio Hatoyama visited India on 27-29 December 2009 for the Annual Summit. The two sides issued (i) a Joint Statement on the New Stage of India-Japan Strategic and Global Partnership and (ii) an Action Plan to Advance Security Cooperation during the visit. Important progress was made on the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor project, with the two sides agreeing to conclude the agreement for the Main Loan for the first phase of the project by March 2010. The Japanese contribution to the joint Project Development Fund for Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) was formalized, while an MOU was signed between DMIC Development Corporation and Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) for

development of eco-friendly cities and smart communities along the Industrial Corridor.

Republic of Korea

Mr. Lee Myung-bak, President of the Republic of Korea (ROK) paid a State Visit to India from 24-27 January 2010. He was also the Chief Guest at the celebrations on 26 January to mark the Republic Day of India. The entire gamut of India-ROK bilateral relations was discussed at the delegation-level talks on 25 January 2010. A Joint Statement was issued following the talks. The highlight of the visit was the decision to elevate India-ROK relations to a "Strategic Partnership". The two sides also decided to set a bilateral trade figure of US\$ 30 billion to be achieved by 2014.

Four documents were signed during the visit, namely (i) Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons, (ii) MOU on Cooperation in Information Technology and Services, (iii) Programme of Cooperation in the Fields of Science and Technology for the period 2010-12 and (iv) MOU between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Korean Aerospace Research Institute (KARI) for Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

Kuwait

External Affairs Minister visited Kuwait from 3-4 February 2010 on the invitation of HE Sheikh Dr.Mohammed Sabah Al Salem Al Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. EAM during the visit called on the Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al Ahamd Al Jabel Al Sabah and the Prime Minister His Highness Sheikh Nasser Mohammed Al Ahmed Al Sabah and held substantive discussions on areas of mutual interest with his counterpart and Kuwaiti leadership. The visit of EAM reinforced and further strengthened the excellent relationship between the two countries. EAM also met a cross section of Indian community and appreciated their role and contribution for promoting bilateral trade and cultural ties between the two countries. No agreement during the visit, however, was signed between the two countries.

Lao PDR

HE Dr.Thong Loun Sisoulith, Foreign Minister and DPM of the People's Republic of Lao visited India from January 31 to February 3, 2010 to attend the 6th India-Laos Joint Commission meeting held in New Delhi. The Laos side requested for softer loans for various projects which are under active consideration. The visit resulted in strengthening of bilateral relationship and international cooperation.

Lithuania

Foreign Minister of Lithuania, Mr. Vygaudas Usackas, accompanied by Economy Minister Mr. Dainius Kreivys, visited India from 2-5 December 2009

and had meetings with External Affairs Minister and Minister for New and Renewable Energy. He also visited Mumbai and participated in the opening ceremony of the Honorary Consulate of Lithuania in Mumbai. Mr. Usackas, along with a business delegation, participated in the Lithuania-India Business Forum in Mumbai.

Malaysia

Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato'Sri Mohd.Najib Tun Abdul Razak visited India from January 19-23, 2010. Three Memorandum of Understanding, vis. Extradition Treaty, Higher Education and Malaysia-India Capital Market Collaborative Agreement between the Securities Commission of Malaysia and the Securities and Exchange Board of India were signed during the visit. A Joint Statement was issued. During the visit bilateral relations between the two countries were reviews and exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual interest. The visit resulted in strengthening of bilateral relationship and international cooperation.

Malta

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Malta, Dr. Tonio Borg, paid an official visit to India from 6-11 January 2010. Besides Delhi he also visited Chennai and Agra. In Chennai Deputy PM of Malta inaugurated the Honorary Consulate of Malta in the presence of Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu and in Delhi he inaugurated the High Commission of Malta, which has been established in July 2007. Deputy PM of Malta held discussions on bilateral and regional issues with Smt. Preneet Kaur. The two sides stressed on the need to strengthen trade and economic ties He also had a meeting with EAM where international issues were discussed.

Nepal

During the visit, both sides expressed their satisfaction at the age-old, close, cordial and multifaceted relations between Nepal and India and agreed to further strengthen the existing relationship. Four MoUs to enhance Air connectivity, development of Railway Infrastructure at five border points along the India-Nepal border, construction of Polytechnic at Hetauda and construction of Sabha Griha at Birgunj were signed during the visit. A concessional US\$ 250 million line of credit was announced during the visit. Supplies of some essential food grains would also be made to Nepal. A copy of the Press Release issued on the visit is attached.

During EAM's visit to Nepal in January 2010, EAM held official talks with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal on all aspects of bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest. They also reaffirmed their determination to consolidate and expand the areas of cooperation with a view to taking the relationship to a new height on the basis of mutual respect, understanding and mutual benefit. Four MoU's for the strengthening of Road Infrastructure in the Terai Area of Nepal, construction of a Science Learning Centre with Government of India assistance,

establishment of a Central Depository System (CDS) in Nepal for development of financial markets in Nepal with Government of India assistance and electrification of five different Village Development Councils in Nepal were signed.

Regular high-level bilateral interactions provide opportunity for exchange of views on areas of mutual interest and concern and help in further strengthening relations.

Palestine

No agreements/MoUs were signed during this working visit.

During the working visit of H.E. President Mahmoud Abbas, he met the Prime Minister on 11 February 2010. On 12 February 2010, the Minister of State for External Affairs, Dr. Shashi Tharoor called on President Abbas.

President Abbas shared his views on recent developments in the Peace Process in West Asia. Prime Minister reiterated India's commitment to the Palestinian cause in line with our support for United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 calling for a negotiated solution resulting in a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine living within secure and recognized borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, side by side at peace with Israel as endorsed in the Quartet Roadmap and UN Security Council Resolutions 1397 and 1515. The Prime Minister also reiterated India's support for the Arab Peace Plan, and urged concerted action for achieving a durable, just and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict. Prime Minister announced a grant of US\$10million as budget support to the Palestinian National Authority and reassured President Abbas of India's support to their efforts aimed at economic and social development.

The visit strengthened India's bilateral relations with Palestine. It was also useful in underlining India's continuing interest in the Peace Process in West Asia.

Russia

Visit of Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Sergei Sobyenin

Russian Deputy Prime Minister and Co-Chairman of the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC) Mr. Sergei Sobyenin visited India from 9-12 November 2009. On November 9, he was hosted for a meeting by External Affairs Minister Shri S.M. Krishna, who is also the Indian Co-Chairman of IRIGC-TEC. Both sides reviewed cooperation in a number of priority sectors such as nuclear energy; space research; high technology; information and communications technology; and pharmaceuticals. They also discussed ways and means of enhancing cooperation in these areas for strengthening bilateral trade and investment relations. Mr. Sobyenin also called on Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, and met Commerce and

Industry Minister Shri Anand Sharma and Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Shri Murli Deora to discuss issues of mutual interest. No bilateral documents were signed during the visit.

Mr. Sobyenin visited India for a second time on 15&16 February 2010 to prepare for the visit of Russian Prime Minister Mr. Vladimir Putin, scheduled for mid-March 2010. During the visit, Mr. Sobyenin called on Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and held meetings with External Affairs Minister Shri S.M. Krishna, Commerce and Industry Minister Shri Anand Sharma and Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Shri Murli Deora, Defence Minister Shri A. K. Antony, National Security Adviser Shri Shivshankar Menon and Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Shri T. K. A. Nair. Apart from reviewing bilateral relations, various elements of the impending visit of the Russian Prime Minister were discussed during these meetings. No bilateral documents were signed during the visit.

Visit of Russian Foreign Minister Mr. Sergei Lavrov

Russian Foreign Minister Mr. Sergei Lavrov visited Bengaluru on 26 & 27 October 2009 for the 9th India-Russia-China trilateral Foreign Ministers' Meeting. A joint communiqué was issued at the end of the meeting. There was no bilateral meeting between External Affairs Minister and the Russian Foreign Minister.

Visits from India

Visit of External Affairs Minister Shri S. M. Krishna to Russia

External Affairs Minister Shri S. M. Krishna visited Moscow from 20-22 October 2009 to co-chair of the 15th session of the IRIGC-TEC with the Russian Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Sergei Sobyenin. Following the meeting of the Inter-Governmental Commission, a protocol, reflecting the decisions, was signed. On the margins, External Affairs Minister called on the President of the Russian Federation Mr. Dmitry Medvedev and also held bilateral discussions with the Russian Foreign Minister Mr. Sergei Lavrov.

Visit of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to Russia

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh visited Moscow from 6-8 December, 2009, at the invitation of President Mr. Dmitry Medvedev, for the annual bilateral Indo-Russian summit. During his visit, the Prime Minister held talks with President Mr. Dmitry Medvedev and Prime Minister Mr. Vladimir Putin. The two Prime Ministers addressed a meeting of the India-Russia CEOs' Council. Separately, Prime Minister had interactions with prominent Russian scholars and Indologists. The following bilateral agreements were signed during the visit: (i) Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Russian Federation on the Programme for Military and Technical Cooperation (MTC) during the period 2011-2020; (ii) Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Russian Federation on After Sales Support for the

Russian Arms and Military Equipment supplied to the Republic of India; (iii) Protocol to the Agreement of the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of Russian Federation on Cooperation in Development and Production of Multi-Role Transport Aircraft of November 12, 2007; (iv) Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Russian Federation on Cooperation in Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy (initialed); (v) Programme of Cultural Exchanges between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Russian Federation for the Years 2010-12; and (vi) A Dollar Agreement for extension of a Line of Credit of US\$ 100 million by Exim Bank to Vnesheconombank for boosting export of Indian goods and technology products to Russia. A Joint Declaration on “Deepening the Strategic Partnership to meet Global Challenges” was also adopted bilaterally at the end of the Summit.

Sao Tome and Principe

H.E. Dr. Carlos Alberto Pires Tiny Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Communities of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, visited India from Nov. 29 – Dec 2, 2009. Official talks on bilateral and multilateral issues were held with Minister of State for External Affairs in New Delhi on 1st December 2009. India announced US\$1 million grant for setting up a Technology Incubation-cum-Production Centre for development of SME sector and another grant of Rs.10 million for meeting immediate requirements in education and health sectors. India also agreed to favourably consider a Line of Credit of US\$5 million for priority projects in the fields of agriculture, capacity building and infrastructure. Joint Statement issued mentioned Government of Sao Tome and Principe's support for India to become a Permanent Member of an expanded UN Security Council as also for a Non-Permanent seat for the term 2011-2012. Protocol on Foreign office Consultations was signed. Sao Tome and Principe joined the Government of India's Pan-African e-Network Project as the 47th country.

Singapore

Minister Mentor and former Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr.Lee Kuan Yew, visited India from December 14-17, 2009 and exchanged views on bilateral relations. Bilateral, regional, international and economic issues of mutual interest were discussed. The visit resulted in strengthening of bilateral relationship and international cooperation.

South Africa

South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ms. Maite Nkoana-Mashabane visited India from 12-15 November 2009. The main issues discussed during the meeting:

- Visit of President Jacob Zuma of South Africa to India
- Institutionalised review of bilateral relations
- India Africa Forum Summit

- Strategic partnership and security cooperation
- Calendar of visits
- Sri Lanka
- Pakistan

No bilateral agreements/MoUs were signed during the visit.

Spain

The Crown Prince of Spain Prince Felipe of Asturias during his visit to India from 10-12 November 2009 had meetings with the Vice President, Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha and EAM. The President hosted a private lunch for the Crown Prince and the Princess. The discussions of the Crown Prince with the Indian leadership focused on bilateral, regional and global issues. The Prince also inaugurated the Cervantes Institute in New Delhi and an Indo-Spanish Investment Seminar in Mumbai. No Agreements/MOUs were signed during the visit.

The visit of the Crown Prince of Spain to India after the first ever state visit of Hon'ble President of India to Spain from 20-23 April, 2009 has imparted a further momentum to the growing Indo-Spanish bilateral relations. Both sides have identified infrastructure, agriculture, tourism, cooperation in Latin America, renewable energy, SMEs and research and development in S&T as focus areas for strengthening bilateral cooperation.

Sweden

The Prime Minister of Sweden, Mr. Frederik Reinfeldt, accompanied by Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, Trade Minister Ewa Bjorling and a large business delegation visited India from November 5-7, 2009 for a bilateral summit on November 5 and the India-EU Summit on November 6, 2009. The entire gamut of bilateral, regional and international issues was discussed. The two countries signed a MoU on Cooperation in the field of Defence and another MoU on Cooperation in the Field of the Environment. This was first high-level visit from Sweden after 2005 and contributed in giving a fillip to bilateral ties.

Thailand

HE Mr.Kasit Piromya, Foreign Minister of Thailand visited India from December 22-27, 2009 and held delegation level talks. Bilateral, regional, international and economic issues of mutual interest were discussed. The visit resulted in strengthening of bilateral relationship and international cooperation.

Prime Minister visited Thailand from October 23-25, 2009 to participate in the 7th ASEAN-India Summit. Bilateral, regional, international and economic issues of mutual interest were discussed. The visit resulted in strengthening of bilateral relationship and international cooperation.

Turkey

His Excellency, Mr. Abdullah Gul, the President of the Republic of Turkey, accompanied by spouse Mrs. Hayrunnisa Gul, paid a State Visit to India from 7-11 February 2010. The President was accompanied by a large delegation that included Ministers, MPs and a large number of business persons. The Turkish President also inaugurated the Turkish Consulate in Mumbai

The visit accorded the two sides the opportunity to review the state of bilateral relations and to chart an agenda for advancing multi-faceted cooperation. It was pointed to the Turkish side that despite having several frameworks and mechanisms for bilateral cooperation and two-way trade crossing US \$3 billion in 2008, the relations are far below their true potential and that India is ready for a much deeper and robust partnership with Turkey. The two sides also agreed on: (a) Joint Declaration on Terrorism, and (b) Joint Declaration on Science & Technology Cooperation

UK (Visit of Hon'ble President)

Hon'ble President was on a state visit to the UK from 27-29 October 2009. Apart from the official delegation, a business delegation and members of the media also accompanied the president. Apart from her interactions with the Queen and other members of the royal family, the President also had a meeting with PM Gordon Brown, Leader of Opposition David Cameron, and Leader of Liberal Democrats Nick Clegg. Hon'ble president also interacted with a large cross section of the Indian diaspora and British Members of Parliament.

The President was received with great warmth and friendship. This was the first state visit after a gap of nearly twenty years. The president had wide ranging discussions with the UK leadership on issues like trade and investment, education, counter-terrorism, science and technology, etc. The President's message of friendship and deepening of strategic partnership was well received.

UK (External Affairs Minister's visit)

External Affairs Minister visited UK from 26-31 January 2010, to attend the London conference on Afghanistan. Apart from attending the conference, he also met the UK Foreign Secretary David Milliband and the EU High Representative Baroness Ashton.

At the conference, EAM put forth India's position that the principal objective of India's development partnership with Afghanistan is to build indigenous Afghan capacities and institutions.

USA

Several MOUs and Agreements were signed during the visit Prime Minister's State visit to USA from 22-26 November 2009. Bilateral Memorandum of Understandings/Intent on: (i) Agricultural Cooperation and Food Security; (ii) Cooperation on Energy Security, Energy Efficiency, Clean Energy and Climate Change; (iii) Establishment of a Regional Global Disease Detection Centre; (iv) Solar Energy; (v) Wind Energy; and (vi) Intellectual Property Rights were signed/initialed on the sidelines of the visit. An Access Agreement on Traditional Knowledge Digital Library between Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Government of India and the US Patent and Trademark Office was also concluded. The "Singh-Obama Knowledge Initiative" to strengthen educational ties and exchanges between India and the USA was also announced during the visit. The two countries expressed their resolve to strengthen counterterrorism cooperation and finalized a Counterterrorism Initiative. External Affairs Minister and Secretary of State, Ms. Hillary Clinton signed the MOU on Cooperation on Energy Security, Energy Efficiency, Clean Energy and Climate Change.

PM met with US President Barack Obama and discussed all aspects of the India-US relationship. The two leaders also exchanged views on regional and global issues of shared interest. President Obama stated that the relationship between the United States and India will be one of the defining partnerships of the 21st century and emphasized that broadening cooperation between India and the US was a priority for him. He also mentioned that India was a rising global power and was increasingly playing an important role in Asia.

The visit has deepened mutual understanding between India and the US and set new directions for India-US Strategic Partnership in a way that will advance India's national interest.

Uzbekistan

External Affairs Minister Shri S.M. Krishna paid an official visit to Uzbekistan on 22-23 October, 2009. He called on the President of Uzbekistan Mr. Islam Karimov on 23 October 2009. During talks between External Affairs Minister and his Russian counterpart Mr. Vladimir Norov, issues discussed included trade & economic cooperation, educational and cultural exchange programmes, science and technology and relaxation in visa policy. Both Ministers expressed satisfaction over growing bilateral cooperation, and discussed regional and global issues. The Uzbek side welcomed the Indian proposal for gifting of medical equipment and supplies worth US\$ 1 million for hospitals in Uzbekistan. External Affairs Minister offered additional developmental assistance to upgrade the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Information Technology established in Tashkent in 2006. He reiterated India's commitment to provide assistance for establishing an Entrepreneurship Development Centre in Uzbekistan. External Affairs Minister also inaugurated the India Centre at the Al-Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies.

Private Visits of President of Slovenia and Prime Ministers of Finland, Greece and Norway

On 4th February 2010, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh had separate meetings with (i) H.E. Dr. Danilo Turk, President of Slovenia; (ii) Mr. Matti Vanhanen, Prime Minister of Finland; (iii) H.E. Mr. George Papandreou, Prime Minister of Greece; and (iv) H.E. Mr. Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of Norway. The above dignitaries are visiting India to participate in the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit, being organized by the TERI from 5th-7th February 2010. Bilateral, regional and international issues were discussed. These were Private visits. Prime Minister offered to enhance economic cooperation with all the countries concerned by creating a credible environment favourable to both domestic and foreign investors, particularly in the infrastructure and communication sectors.

With Slovenia, PM offered to explore shipping links and strengthen Indian participation in the International Centre for Promotion of Enterprises.

PM suggested to the Prime Minister of Greece that the bilateral trade could soon reach €1 bn and proposed further cooperation in areas such as shipping, renewable energy, IT and tourism. Both leaders agreed to share experiences in upgrading the quality of public administration through e-governance, administrative reforms, greater transparency and streamlining public delivery.

PM welcomed the fact that companies from Finland such as Nokia have created job opportunities for young people in India, helping to empower them through appropriate training.

PM also welcomed investments from Norway in the telecom sector as well as significant flows from Norway's Pension Fund, noting potential for cooperation in renewable energy and hydro power.

ANNEXURE - III

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (E) OF
LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.408 REGARDING
VISIT OF FOREIGN DIGNITARIES TO INDIA**

Visits abroad of Prime Minister of India

1.	PM to Thailand [7 th ASEAN-INDIA Summit]	October 23-25, 2009
2.	President to UK and Cyprus –	October 26- Nov. 1, 2009
3.	PM to USA & Trinidad & Tobago [CHOGM 26-28]	November 21-28, 2009
4.	PM to Denmark [Climate Summit]	December 17-18, 2009

Visits abroad of External Affairs Minister

1.	EAM to Russian Federation and Uzbekistan	October 20-24, 2009
2.	EAM to Afghanistan	November 18-19, 2009
3.	EAM to USA	November 21-25, 2009
4.	EAM to Trinidad & Tobago	November 26-29, 2009
5.	EAM to Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar	December 10-11, 2009
6.	EAM to UK	January 26-31, 2010
7.	EAM to Kuwait	February 3-4, 2010