

Agreement and its 2011 Protocol address outstanding land boundary issues between the two countries, including the issue of adverse possessions on both sides of the border. Instruments of Ratification of the Agreement and its Protocol were exchanged on June 6, 2015 during Prime Minister's visit to Bangladesh.

Issues discussed during Prime Minister's visit to Iran

1159. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the issues discussed and concrete action proposed during the visit of Indian Prime Minister to Iran;

(b) whether proposal to make investments in the field of energy, trade and investment for mutual benefit was discussed and if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether development of Chabahar port in Iran was discussed and the proposal made for fast-tracking its investment, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GENERAL (RETD.) V. K. SINGH]: (a) to (c) Prime Minister met the President of Iran Dr. Hassan Rouhani in Ufa, Russia on 9 July, 2015 on the margins of the SCO Summit. During their meeting facets of India-Iran bilateral relations and regional issues were discussed. The issues discussed included:

- (i) India's participation in the development of Chahbahar port and Chahbahar Free Trade Zone.
- (ii) India's participation in the Chahbahar-Zahidan railway line.
- (iii) Long term investment in Supply of oil and gas.
- (iv) Oil payments issue.
- (v) Award of Farzad B off shore gas field to ONGC.
- (vi) Indian interest in the Iranian fertilizer sector.
- (vii) Indian investments in steel, power and petrochemicals.

PM also discussed issues relating to Afghanistan and the need for a global response to terrorism.

Ties with Iran

1160. SHRI PAUL MANOJ PANDIAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is true that India has begun to reset its ties with Iran, notwithstanding the uncertainty surrounding the negotiations between the Persian Gulf Nation and the P5+1;

(b) whether it is also true that India is now keen to push for connectivity with Iran, which would pave the way for its entry into Afghanistan and the Central Asian region, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether it is also true that Government has also ignored cautionary voices from the United States not to rush into doing business with Iran till it firms up the nuclear deal with it, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GENERAL (RETD.) V. K. SINGH]: (a) to (c) India and Iran have traditionally enjoyed close, friendly and cooperative bilateral ties rooted in deep historical, cultural and civilisational links. In recent years bilateral ties have been characterized by frequent interactions at the highest levels including the recent meeting between Prime Minister and the President of Iran in Ufa, Russia on 9 July, 2015 on the margins of the SCO Summit.

Since September, 2000, India has been cooperating with Iran to develop the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) that will also include participation of Russia. In August 2014, a trial run of two containers was conducted on this corridor, followed by a visit of a Commerce Ministry delegation in January, 2015 that held further discussions related to its operationalization. During the visit of Minister of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways to Tehran from 5-7 May, 2015, India and Iran also signed an Inter-Governmental Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that will pave the way for bilateral cooperation in the development of the Iranian Port of Chahbahar. These projects aim to enhance India's connectivity to Afghanistan and countries of the Central Asian Region.

India's bilateral relations with Iran stand on their own and are not influenced by India's relations with any third country.

Shifting of Haj Headquarters from Mumbai to Delhi

1161. SHRI GULAM RASOOL BALYAWI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question No. 1720 given in Rajya Sabha on 24th July, 2014 and state:

(a) whether any fresh suggestions or requests have been received by Government for shifting the Headquarters of Haj Committee of India from Mumbai to Delhi, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) the action being taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GENERAL (RETD.) V. K. SINGH]: (a) and (b) No fresh suggestions or requests for shifting of Headquarters of Haj Committee of India from Mumbai to Delhi have been received by the Government recently.