

Deterioration of Indo-Nepal relations

2819. SHRI D. P. TRIPATHI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the reasons for the deterioration of Indo-Nepal relations in the recent past; and
- (b) the measures taken by Government to rectify the unfortunate fall-out in Indo-Nepal relations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI M. J. AKBAR): (a) and (b) There is no deterioration of India's ties with Nepal. India's age-old ties with Nepal are unique and special, characterized by an open border based on shared history, geography, culture, close people-to-people ties, mutual security and close economic linkages. Two-thirds of Nepal's global trade is with India and over 90% of Nepal's third country import-export transit through India. India is committed to further strengthen and expand India-Nepal cooperation through regular bilateral exchanges and development assistance. Our bilateral mechanisms covering the areas of defence and security, trade, power, water resources and border management are meeting regularly besides the India-Nepal Joint Commission which comprehensively reviews the entire gamut of bilateral relations. India continues to extend all assistance in accordance with the aspirations of the people of Nepal, for peace, stability and socio-economic development of the country.

Operation Sankat Mochan to rescue Indians in Sudan

2820. SHRIMATI WANSUK SYIEM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India recently carried out successfully its rescue operation code named operation Sankat Mochan to evacuate a large number of Indians stranded at Jubah in South Sudan where a civil war had erupted earlier killing more than 300 persons from various ethnic factions; and
- (b) whether considering the urgency and complexity of the situation, India chose to depute its Minister of State for External Affairs to personally supervise the rescue operations, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI M. J. AKBAR): (a) Hostilities broke out between two warring factions in South Sudan's capital Juba on 07 July 2016, resulting in fatalities and disruption of normal services of public utilities and movement. The Government of India, in order to alleviate the difficulties faced by our nationals in South Sudan, launched Operation Sankat Mochan under which 153 Indians and 2 citizens of Nepal were evacuated.

(b) Yes, considering the urgency of the situation, Minister of State for External Affairs Gen (Retd.) V. K. Singh led the team of Ministry of External Affairs officials who went to Juba on-board Indian Air Force aircraft to bring back the Indian nationals on 14-15 July, 2016.

Indian's entry into SCO

2821. SHRI T. RATHINAVEL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a long drawn process lies ahead for India to complete its entry into the Shanghai Corporation Organisation (SCO);

(b) whether it is also a fact that India has sought fairly flexible multilateralism in its extended neighbourhood; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that India has signed a base document which is called the Memorandum of Obligations, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI M. J. AKBAR): (a) As per membership process put in place by SCO, countries aspiring to become members of SCO need to conclude with SCO a Memorandum of Obligations (MoO). India signed such MoO with SCO on 24 June, 2016. The MoO *inter alia* details obligations of India towards acceding to 35 (thirty-five) SCO documents/agreements as per timeline also indicated in MoO, spanning from November, 2016 till April, 2017.

(b) India pursues a relationship of friendliness and cooperation with all countries in the world, including its immediate and extended neighbourhood. These relations are developed on a bilateral basis as well as through existing regional mechanisms in our extended neighbourhood such as ASEAN, ARF, EAS, GCC and SCO.

(c) India signed the Memorandum of Obligations with the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation on June 24, 2016, at Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

States selected under "Housing for All" scheme

†2822. SHRI NARENDRA BUDANIA: Will the Minister of HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether some States have been selected under "Housing in All" scheme, if so, the details thereof;

(b) the number of houses to be constructed, State-wise and the marks in which the States and the cities or towns therein have been selected;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.