

Foreign Minister's Myanmar and Thailand Visits

5315. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he has visited Myanmar and Thailand in the month of March, 2002;

(b) if so, what were the main topics discussed with both Myanmar and Thailand;

(c) whether Government have decided to have a trade and tourism corridor *via* Myanmar;

(d) if so, whether the Myanmar had recently declared that it would not allow its territory to be used for anti-India activities; and

(e) if so, what were the main agreements reached during his visit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a), (b), (c) and (e) EAM attended the India-Myanmar-Thailand Ministerial Meeting on Transport Linkages held on April 5-6-2002 in Myanmar. The three Foreign Ministers discussed a wide range of issues pertaining to development of transport linkages interconnecting the three countries focusing on construction of a new highway through Myanmar. Such a network would promote trade, investment, tourism and people-to-people interaction amongst the three countries and promote cooperation between South Asia and South-West Asia. The meeting agreed on following areas of cooperation :

(i) Construction of a highway from Moreh in India to Mae Sot in Thailand through Bagan in Myanmar.

(ii) Promotion of a highway from Kanchanaburi in Thailand to deep seaport in Myanmar and shipping links to seaports in India as part and parcel to one integrated package.

(iii) Promotion of trade investment and tourism through facilitation of transit of goods and people across the border.

(iv) Cooperation in human resource development.

Two task forces have been set up for implementation of this project, the one on financing to be chaired by Thailand and the one on technical matters to be chaired by India. The two task forces are now expected to meet in June 2002 in Yangon to hold discussions.

(d) Myanmar has consistently and categorically assured us that it will not allow its territory to be used by forces hostile to India.

SAARC Information Minister's Conference

5316. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(b) whether India attended the SAARC Information Ministers Conference held on 6th March, 2002 in Pakistan;

(c) if so, the main subject discussed in the Conference;

(d) whether any proposal was submitted by Indian representative in the SAARC meeting; and

(e) if so, the outcome of the Conference?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(a) The Ministers reviewed implementation of the earlier Plan of Action on media and Information cooperation. They also discussed training facilities for media persons, model guidelines on transnational satellite broadcasting in the region, the feasibility of setting up a SAARC Information Centre and the issue of free movement of media personnel within the region amongst others.

(b) India had proposed a draft Model Guidelines on Transnational Satellite Broadcasting which was circulated amongst SAARC members for their comments.

(c) The Conference issued a Report on the issues discussed and decisions reached.