

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

**MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA**

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-2057**

**ANSWERED ON- 02/08/2024**

**PROMOTION OF TRADE INVESTMENT**

**2057. SMT. POONAMBEN HEMATBHAI MAADAM:**

**Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether there have been improvements in transportation and communication infrastructure connecting India with its neighbouring countries, if so, the details thereof;**
- (b) whether the Government has taken any steps to promote trade and investment with neighbouring countries, if so, the details thereof; and**
- (c) whether there are any infrastructure projects in neighbouring countries that showcase India's cooperation efforts and if so, the details thereof?**

**ANSWER**

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)**

**(a) There have been substantial improvements in transportation and communication infrastructure connecting India with neighbouring countries. These improvements have been achieved inter-alia through the following steps:**

**(i) Bangladesh: Khulna-Mongla Port rail line project, Akhaura-Agartala cross-border rail line, waterways, Integrated Check Posts (ICPs), Air**

**links- Presently 117 flights are operating weekly between India and Bangladesh connecting various Indian cities like New Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, and Chennai to Dhaka and Chittagong; and ongoing development of port infrastructure.**

**(ii) Bhutan: Both sides have agreed to establish the first set of Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) between India and Bhutan at Jaigaon(West Bengal)-Phuentsholing (Bhutan) and Dadgiri (Assam) and Gelephu (Bhutan). In the 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan (FYP) of Bhutan, Government provided a grant assistance of Rs 5000 crore for executing projects, including infrastructure projects, in a wide range of sectors.**

**(iii) Nepal: Integrated Check Posts along the India - Nepal Border (viz. ICP Nepalgunj, ICP Bhairahawa); railway lines - (Jogbani - Biratnagar railway link and Jaynagar - Bardibas rail link). For improvement of the energy connectivity- a Multi-Product Pipeline from Motihari, India to Amlekhgunj, Nepal has been commissioned in 2019 (in phase-I).**

**(iv) Myanmar: Establishment of border connectivity projects including the Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project and India - Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway project, Integrated Check-Post (ICP) at Tamu, establishment of Border Haats.**

**(v) Maldives: Total of 45 weekly flights operating between India and Maldives. In addition, an India-Maldives Shipping Service handling cargo**

**is also operational between the ports of India and Maldives since September 2020.**

**(vi) Sri Lanka: Both Indian and Sri Lankan sides have been working to improve the transportation facilities between the two countries. Flight services were started between Chennai-Jaffna sector in 2019 and the ferry services were launched between Nagapattinam (India) and Kankesanthurai (Sri Lanka) in October 2023.**

**(b) Government has taken several steps to promote trade and investment with neighbouring countries under the Neighbourhood First policy. These include inter-alia Market Access Initiative (MAI) Scheme and Trade Infrastructure for Export (TIES) Scheme. MAI scheme aims to enhance exports through accessing new markets or through increasing the share in the existing markets. TIES scheme provides assistance for setting up and up-gradation of infrastructure projects with overwhelming export linkages. Further steps taken by the Government include inter-alia signing of Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA), establishment of Inter-Governmental Committee (IGC) meeting on trade, transit and cooperation, Long Term Power Trade Agreement with Nepal, and establishment of a modern Integrated Check-Posts, border haats with some of the neighbouring countries. Government has also supported a range of development projects under various modalities in the**

**neighbouring countries. In the regional cooperation platform Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) consisting of neighbouring countries, several initiatives have been undertaken to promote intra-regional trade and investment including the negotiation of the BIMSTEC Free Trade Agreement.**

**(c) There are several infrastructure projects in neighbouring countries that showcase India's development cooperation efforts. These include:**

**(i) Afghanistan: Parliament building, India-Afghanistan friendship dam.**

**(ii) Bangladesh Infrastructure Development for Power Evacuation Facilities of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, Maitree Super Thermal Power Plant**

**(iii) Bhutan: Punatsangchhu Hydroelectric project and Mangdechhu Hydroelectric project**

**(iv) Nepal: Koshi Corridor Transmission Line Project, National Police Academy and various road projects**

**(v) Maldives: National College of Policing and Law Enforcement, Gan International Airport project, Hanimaadhoo International Airport**

**(vi) Mauritius: ENT Hospital, Supreme Court Building, Metro project**

**(vii) Sri Lanka: Indian Housing Project, Jaffna Cultural Centre, railway sector projects**

**\*\*\*\*\***