

Discussion on China during visit to Russia

†39. SHRI PRABHAT JHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that any discussion has been made with China in regards of border dispute during recent Russian visit by Prime Minister;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the total number of discussions made between India and China for border dispute and the details of progress in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR): (a) and (b) Prime Minister had a bilateral meeting with Chinese President Hu Jintao on 15th June, 2009 on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and BRIC Summits at Yekaterinburg. The two leaders discussed the boundary question and agreed to move forward with the discussions between the Special Representatives of the two Prime Ministers on the boundary question in the spirit of peace, friendship and mutual respect in order to seek a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement. They further agreed that pending the settlement of the boundary question, both sides would maintain peace and tranquility in the India-China border areas.

(c) During the visit of PM Vajpayee to China from 22 to 27 June, 2003, the two sides agreed to each appoint a Special Representative to explore from the political perspective of the overall bilateral relationship the framework for a boundary settlement. There have been twelve meetings of the Special Representatives so far. The first five meetings resulted in the signing of the **“Agreement on the Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the India-China Boundary Question”** on April 11, 2005. Presently the two Special Representatives are exploring the framework for a final package settlement covering all sectors of the boundary. The thirteenth meeting of the Special Representatives is scheduled to be held in India on dates convenient to the two sides.

BRIC meeting in Russia

40. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister attended the Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC) meeting in Russia this year;

(b) if so, the various mutual interest that were discussed and whether any agreement was reached or signed there; and

(c) if so, the steps taken to fulfil the agreement or are being taken in regard to the agreement reached there?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR): (a) Yes. Prime Minister attended the Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC) meeting in Russia on 16 June, 2009.

(b) At the BRIC Summit, the Leaders of the four countries reviewed the current state of global economic and financial crisis and discussed the forthcoming G8 and G20 Summits. The Summit adopted a Joint Statement of BRIC Leaders and a Joint Statement on Global Food Security.

(c) BRIC Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors will meet before the Pittsburgh G-20 Summit in September 2009 and examine the further steps to be taken to intensify cooperation in the BRIC format on economic matters, to seek implementation of those decisions of G-20 Summits which are of interest to developing countries, and to pursue reform of the present structures of the international financial system and of global governance.

Passport for Haj pilgrims

41. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether International Passport has been made compulsory for all Haj pilgrims from this year onwards;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the applicants for issue of temporary country specific passport are exempted from police verification;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether Government proposes to open special passport counters across the country;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the efforts that Government is making to ensure that opportunity for Haj is not lost because of passport and Hajis face no difficulties in undertaking the sacred journey?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SHASHI THAROOR): (a) and (b) Government of India is aware that in accordance with the decision of the Saudi Government all Haj pilgrims will have to travel on International Passport for Haj-2009 onwards.

(c) Yes.

(d) to (g) Government has issued new policy guidelines to all the Passport Offices after consultation with the National and State Haj Committees to ensure that no Haj pilgrim faces any hurdles in obtaining his/her passport to undertake the pilgrimage All Passport Offices have been instructed that the Haj passports should be handed over to the Haj pilgrims/Haj Committee within the due date stipulated by the Committee to ensure that no Hajis face any difficulty in undertaking the sacred journey.