

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) During the Prime Minister's meeting with President Musharraf of Pakistan in Havana on 16 September 2006, it was decided to put in place an India-Pakistan anti-terrorism institutional mechanism to identify and implement counter-terrorism initiatives and investigations. During the Foreign Secretary talks in November 2006, both sides agreed to set up a 3-member Anti-Terrorism Mechanism.

(e) The first meeting of the Joint-Anti-Terrorism Mechanism took place on 6-7 March 2007 in Islamabad. At this meeting both sides agreed that specific information would be exchanged through the mechanism for helping investigations on either side related to terrorist acts and prevention of violence and terrorist acts in the two countries. It was also agreed that while the Anti-Terrorism Mechanism would meet on a quarterly basis, any information which is required to be conveyed on priority basis would be immediately conveyed through the respective heads of the mechanism.

Visa by Ambassadors/High Commissioners

2620. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have empowered our Ambassadors and High Commissioners to grant one-time five year visas to foreign scholars;

(b) the details of this policy;

(c) whether this rule applies to all foreign countries without exception;

(d) whether Government have asked for "Reciprocal Visa facilities" for Indian Scholars; and

(e) if not, reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes.

(b) An applicant for student visa must produce proof of admission to a full time course in a recognised/reputed educational institution in India and of satisfactory evidence of financial support in the form of a letter of support from parent/guardian accompanied by a bank guarantee. The applicant must also produce, to the satisfaction of the Mission, evidence of transfer of adequate funds for at least four months sustenance in India

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or produce travellers cheques for a similar amount. The Mission would satisfy itself that there is no adverse information against the student and that/she would leave India on completion of his/her studies.

(c) No.

(d) and (e) We have not so far come across any instance of Indian scholars not getting visas for other countries. We are, therefore, not asking for reciprocal visa facilities from other countries. In any case, the Government keep the visa policy under review with a view to making any changes that may be necessary from time to time on grounds of reciprocity.

Occupation of no-man's land by Nepalese people

2621. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Nepali citizens forcibly occupied 205 acres no man's land near Kishanganj District;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken to get the land vacated;

(c) whether it is also fact that this Border is being used freely to smuggle arms and ammunition; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken to control it?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: (a) to (b) The India-Nepal boundary alignment in the district of Kishanganj is already identified by both the Governments and pillars have been jointly demarcated/constructed. Most of the boundary in this sector is riverine. The boundary had been identified on the basis of the fixed boundary principle in which the old river course, as depicted on the basis maps jointly agreed by the two sides, was accepted as the boundary between India and Nepal. However, there has been a change in the course of the river over the years resulting in some land being occupied by citizens of one country now belonging to the other, and *vice versa*, resulting in adverse possessions. There has been an attempt by a few Nepalese farmers to occupy and cultivate the fertile land between Pillar No.(s) 106—109 two years ago *i.e.* in March' 2005 on the Indo-Nepal border in Kishanganj district, which was aborted.