SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR: Sir, I would like to tell the hon. Member that these Cultural Centres are doing very good work in promoting the Indian culture abroad. There are not only dance and music programmes, we have lectures, talks, seminars, conferences, etc., not only in the cities where they are located but also in the other cities in the same country. There are regular screenings of Indian films and we do have cultural troupes with the help of teachers and local students that stage performances throughout the country so that we can take our very rich heritage and culture to all parts of the countries where the Cultural Centres are existing.

श्री विनय कटियार : माननीय सभापति जी, मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूं कि यह देश बहुभाषी और बहु-संस्कृति वाला है और उन्होंने जो 26 सेंटर्स खोले है, क्या वहां पर वेद, पुराण, गीता, कुरान, गुरुग्रंथ साहिब, महापुरुषों, आदि के विषयों में भी कहीं कोई जानकारी दी जाती है? जिनको हम अपने देश में पूजा का ग्रंथ मानते हैं, विदेशों में researchers इन पर रिसर्च करके काफी आगे बढ़ रहे हैं। तो इन केंद्रों पर क्या इन विषयों की जानकारी भी देने की कोई व्यवस्था है? अगर नहीं है, तो क्या आप और धन allot करते हुए इसका विस्तार करेंगी?

श्रीमती परनीत कौर : सर, मैं कहना चाह रही हूं कि एक activity जो इन cultural centres में है, वह है कि हम अपनी भाषा में प्रोग्राम रखें। वहां के ICCR के माध्यम से विश्व में एक हिंदी चेयर भी हमने रखवाई है, जो हमारी संस्कृति में सब कुछ सिखाते हैं। योगा क्लासेज और जो हमारे कल्चर की क्लासेज है, उनमें हम सब सिखाते है।

श्री विनय कटियार : सर, मैंने कुछ और पूछा था। सभापति जी, जो हमारी संस्कृति का अंग है, हमारे जो धार्मिक ग्रंथ है, मैंने तो उनके विषय में प्रश्न पूछा था कि क्या इसके साथ-साथ कहीं उनका भी अध्ययन होता है? क्या इस दृष्टिकोण से भी आप अपने देश की संस्कृति को विदेशों में देने का काम करेंगी? इसको फैलाने का काम करेंगी? कल्चर में डांस हो रहा है, यह तो हम लोग जान रहे है, लेकिन इस डांस के अलावा भी कुछ हो रहा है या नहीं?

श्रीमती परनीत कौर : यह जो आपने सवाल किया है, मैं कहना चाहती हूं कि अपने देश के संबंध में हम जो lectures करवाते हैं, seminars करवाते हैं, उसमें हम यह सब्जेक्ट दे सकते है कि इसके साथ हमारी जो दूसरी संस्कृति है, उसको लोग जानें। इसके अलावा जो हिंदी चेयर्स है, संस्कृत की चेयर्स है, यह भी हम वहां सिखाते है।

Cyber Espionage

*486.SHRI N.K. SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a)   whether Government is aware that crucial data has possibly been lost to Chinese hackers who attacked computers at the Ministry of Defence, External Affairs and National Security Council Secretariat and also of some independent Defence analysts;

(b)   if so, the facts thereof;

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(c)   whether a top cyber security expert of the Ministry of IT was sent to Toranto to meet the researchers who apparently proved that the computers had been hacked; and

(d)   if so, the facts thereof and steps taken to check such cyber espionage?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SACHIN PILOT): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) The Government is aware of a report titled "Shadows in the Cloud - Investigating Cyber Espionage 2.0" published by the group of researchers from the Munk school of Global Affairs, University of Toronto, Canada.

An agency of the Government has been investigating such types of attacks by adversaries for some time. Attack attempts were witnessed on selected information systems. An investigation had already been launched into the matter prior to the reports that appeared in the media. The agency is working in close coordination with various agencies and service providers to identify reportedly affected computer systems, their locations and thereafter sanitizing them. The investigation will enable a comprehensive view on the subject to deal with the threats to be worked out.

(c)   Minister of State for Communications and IT led a delegation to USA and Canada to explore the possibility of collaboration in the area of Information Technology including cyber security. The delegation which included Director General, Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) also visited university of Toronto and Munk School of Global Affairs and interacted with the team of researchers in the said school. The Director of the Research Group which brought out the report "Shadows in Cloud" was also part of the team of Munk School of Global Affairs that interacted with the Indian delegation.

(d)   The Government has taken several measures to detect cyber attacks/espionage.

1.   As per existing computer security guidelines issued by Government, no sensitive information is to be stored on the systems that are connected to Internet.

2.   The Government has formulated Crisis Management Plan for countering cyber attacks and cyber terrorism. For implementation by all Ministries/ Departments of Central Government, State Governments and their organizations and critical sectors.

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3.   The organizations operating critical information infrastructure have been advised to implement information security management practices based on International Standard ISO 27001.

4.   Ministries and Departments have been advised to carry out their IT systems audit regularly to ensure robustness of their systems. CERT-IN has already empanelled a number of penetration testing professionals through a stringent mechanism of selection to carryout audits.

5.   National Informatics Centre (NIC) is continuously strengthening the security of the network operated by them and its services by enforcing security policies, conducting regular security audits and deploying various technologies at different levels of the network to defend against the newer techniques being adopted by the hackers from time to time.

6.   The Information Technology Act, 2000 as amended by the Information Technology (Amendment) Act, 2008 has been enforced on 27.10.2009. The Act provides legal framework to address the issues connected with hacking and security breaches of information technology infrastructure.

Section 70 of the Act provides to declare any computer resource which directly or indirectly affects the facility of Critical Information Infrastructure, to be a protected system.

Further, Section 70B has empowered Indian Computer Emergency Response Team to serve as national nodal agency in the area of cyber security.

7.   The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) scans the Indian Cyber Space to detect traces of any untoward incident that poses a threat to the cyber space. CERT-In performs both proactive and reactive roles in computer security incidents prevention, identification of solution to security problems, analyzing product vulnerabilities, malicious codes, web defacements, open proxy servers and in carrying out relevant research and development.

Sectoral CERTs have been functioning in the areas of defence and Finance for catering critical domains. They are equipped to handle and respond to domain specific threats emerging from the cyber systems.

CERT-In has published several Security Guidelines for safeguarding computer systems from hacking and these have been widely circulated. All Government Departments/ Ministries, their subordinate offices and public sector undertakings have been advised to implement these guidelines to secure their computer systems and information technology infrastructure.

CERT-In issues security alerts, advisories to prevent occurrence of cyber incidents and also conducts security workshops and training programs on regular basis to enhance user awareness.

SHRI N.K. SINGH: Sir, essentially, this is a competitive race between the ingenuity of the hackers and the quality of our response mechanism. So, notwithstanding the measures listed out in Part (c) and Part (d) of the reply, which the hon. Minister has furnished, I would like to know what additional measures the Government contemplates because in spite of all these measures, there has been a breach. What additional measures does the Government contemplate to stay ahead of this competitive race?

SHRI SACHIN PILOT: Sir, this question is of utmost importance. As the technological advances are taking place, as the world gets more digitized, rules and engagements, especially, in such areas are changing very rapidly. I would like to assure the hon. Member, through you, that the Government is very alive and very much aware of these challenges that are coming up in front of us. The I.T. Act of 2000 was amended in 2008, and on 27th October of last year, the Amendment was notified, as per which Section 70 provides that any organization, whether private or Government, if it is notified as a protected system, then, any breach of that is liable with a ten-year imprisonment and is a non-bailable offence. Besides that, I would like to state for the reference of the hon. House that the Government of India's guideline is that any critical or any sensitive information is not to be put on any systems that are interfacing with the internet. So, all critical Government agencies, Government of India Departments, have their own internal networks, and we are all updating our system, our protective mechanism, our firewalls, so as to ensure that we are able to offer a secure cyber space, not just for our citizens but also for our Government agencies. There are incidents of cyber crime, identity theft and espionage, and various attempts are always going on. But we are well aware and actively working towards ensuring a secure cyber space in India.

SHRI N.K. SINGH: Sir, I will not push the first supplementary which I have put because in spite of all the measures this breach has taken place. Let me come to my second supplementary.

In reply, a mention has been made of the visit of the Minister of State to the United States and to Canada. Is the Minister sanguine that our practices meet the best international benchmarks in respect of trying to avert such cyber crimes and what is the quality of the enforcement of international conventions and international agreement to prevent the occurrence of cyber crimes?

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SHRI SACHIN PILOT: Sir, it is a fact that I had gone to the United States and to Canada and I had met with people at the Munk School of Global Affairs, Toronto, on which the hon. Member has based his question. I would like to tell the hon. Member, through you, Sir, that the Government was well aware of this report before it became public. It was published in The New York Times and, subsequently, in sections of media in India. We were aware of this. We were already in contact with the institution and, at all times, we are taking protective measures to ensure that such crimes do not happen. As a matter of fact, the authenticity and legitimacy of the claims made by such reports are still under investigation. I would like to point out that in February, 2010, there was an Inter-Ministerial Group Task Force set up precisely for this, which involves 13 Government agencies. I can also assure the House that India is not only an IT super power in export services, but we also have some of the best practices that have emanated from our Government agencies and certain 24x7 response teams. So, we are not only doing safeguarding but also proactively ensuring that the end-users are using the best practices to ensure that systems, whether private or public, remain safe and secure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad. ...*(Interruptions)*... All right. ...*(Interruptions)*... All right. I am coming to other questions. Please be patient. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please be patient.

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Mr. Minister, I have a very simple question. I have seen your reply. The question is, whether because of Chinese hackers, datas of National Security Adviser and the Ministry of External Affairs have been lost. You have talked of an investigation; fine! But I would like to know if the data has been lost or not. That is the first part of my question.

SHRI SACHIN PILOT: Sir, the answer clearly states that the Government and all its various agencies are checking the authenticity of the claims that have been made in the report that was published in a section of the media as the matter is quite sensitive and under investigation. Until the investigations are over, it would not be proper on my part to reply to this question.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Sir, the Government is aware that crucial data has possibly been lost to Chinese hackers through their attack on the computers of Ministries of Defence and External Affairs and the Secretariat of the National Security Adviser. I would like to tell the hon. Minister that his reply is very vague. It doesn't say clearly, under what circumstances did the Chinese hackers launch their attack. What measures have you taken? What does the report say? You said that you were aware of the report. Is that a fact or not?

SHRI SACHIN PILOT: Sir, many countries including India face a continuous threat from individuals and organizations which, through the cyber space, have the capacity of inflicting harm disproportionate to their conventional strength. It is a global challenge and India is also facing these challenges. I would like to state that the report that has been published in the newspapers makes certain claims. Now, Sir, there are many individuals and entities which are making multiple claims. It is for us to ascertain whether these claims are authentic. Obviously, anybody who writes a report would claim that the report is genuine. But it is for us to have an internal assessment. Sometimes some items and articles are marked 'important', 'secret', etc. But we have to undergo the process of ascertaining whether these facts and documents are genuine or not. We also have a crisis management plan countering cyber attacks and cyber terrorism. We are continuously having workshops. We have been doing capacity enhancement and training of all people who interface with the computer networks. As I said earlier, there is a guideline by the Government of India that all sensitive matters that are important security matters, etc. are not to be put on systems that are interfacing with the Internet, in general.

श्री श्रीगोपाल व्यास : सभापति महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूं कि जो इस प्रकार की जासूसी के विषय है, जो प्रमाणित भी हो रहे है, क्या वे सरकारों के द्वारा किसी नियंत्रण में आते हैं? क्या विदेश मंत्रालय के माध्यम से सरकारों के साथ में उठाए जा सकते हैं - विशेषकर चीन के संबंध में? यदि हां, तो क्या उठाए गए है? कृपया यह बताने का कष्ट करें।

श्री सचिन पायलट : सर, हम लोग निरन्तर सम्पर्क में रहते हैं, दुनिया भर में ऐसे देश चाहें वे आधुनिक हों या विकसित हों, जहां-जहां हम लोग आपस में समन्वय करने के अवसर ढूंढते हैं और निश्चित रूप से साइबर अटैक और साइबर क्राइम इस तरह के जो अपराध होते है उन पर हम नाना प्रकार के सहयोग एक दूसरे को देते रहते है। बहुत से ऐसे देश है जो भारत से मदद मांगते है कि वे बैस्ट प्रैक्टिसिज वहां पर इम्प्लीमेंट कर सके। जो बाकी देश है उनके साथ हम समन्वय और सम्वाद हमेशा निरन्तर जारी रखते है और विदेश मंत्रालय और भारत सरकार के जो बाकी मंत्रालय है, हमारा आई.टी. का मंत्रालय है, हम सबकी एक कमेटी बनी हुई है और समय-समय पर एक दूसरे के साथ सम्वाद करके हम लोग कोशिश करते हैं कि ऐसे अटैक और इस प्रकार के इंस्टेंस भविष्य में न हों।

Ground water for drinking

*487.SHRI GOVINDRAO WAMANRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a)   whether ground water in more than a third of Indian districts is not fit for drinking;

(b)   whether it is a fact that ground water is one of the key supplies and dependence on ground water has been increasing over the years; and