

Delay in Passport Seva Project

3296. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the reasons for inordinate delay and repeated postponement of the launching of pilot phase of Passport Seva Project; and
- (b) the steps taken by Government to implement this project on pan-India basis at the earliest?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR): (a) Pilot Phase of the Passport Seva Project was launched in Karnataka and Chandigarh in May and August, 2010 respectively. The delay in launching of the Project was due to the fact that during testing of the Application Software, critical errors were found. The errors could be rectified after multiple rounds of testing by the Third party Audit Agency under the Department of Information Technology. Appropriate action was taken against the Service Provider as per the provisions of the Master Services Agreement for the delay.

(b) The Government is taking steps to implement the Passport Seva Project across the country. As part of Pilot Project, 7 Passport Seva Kendras are already operational. The remaining 70 Passport Seva Kendras will be rolled out during the year 2011.

Water sharing pact with China

3297. SHRI T.M. SELVAGANAPATHI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that there has been a demand to enter into a water sharing pact with China regarding sharing of water from Brahmaputra;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government had taken any initiative to approach the Chinese Government to enter into a water sharing pact regarding Brahmaputra; and
- (d) if so, the response received by Government from Chinese side?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR): (a) to (d) During the visit of Chinese President Hu Jintao to India, in November 2006, India and China agreed to set up an Expert-Level Mechanism (ELM) on trans-border rivers. The ELM has held four meetings, in September 2007, April 2008, April 2009 and April 2010. Government takes up relevant issues relating to trans-border rivers, with the Chinese side through this Expert Level Mechanism. India and China have also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Provision of Hydrological Information on the Yarlung Zangbo/Brahmaputra River in Flood Season in 2002 which was renewed in 2008.