

[23 December, 2004]

RAJYA SABHA

finalization of the investigations. Since the cases have been registered recently, investigations in all these cases are in progress and further action will be taken as per law on the basis of evidence collected during investigations. Information pertaining to departmental action is not maintained centrally.

Regional Passport Office at Aizawl

*334. SHRI LALHMING LIANA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government are contemplating opening of a Regional Passport Office at Aizawl;
- (b) if so, the action taken thereon; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) The number of passport applications received from Mizoram is very small and hence it is felt that there is no need to open a full-fledged Passport Office at Aizawl at present.

India-ASEAN Summit

*335. SHRI AJAY SINGH CHAUTALA:
SHRI DARA SINGH:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Indian Prime Minister attended the Third India-ASEAN Summit held at Vientiane in Laos on November 29-30, 2004;
- (b) if so, the details of discussions and the outcome thereof, indicating names of other countries which participated at the Summit;
- (c) whether Indian Prime Minister also held bilateral meetings with his counterpart of China, Japan, etc. on the sideline of Summit;
- (d) if so, with what results; and
- (e) whether India's proposal of a road and rail link between India and South-East articulated at the above mentioned Summit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes, Sir, Prime Minister attended the 3rd India-ASEAN Summit in Vientiane on November 29-30, 2004.

(b) All the member States of ASEAN *viz.* Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, participated in the Summit. International and regional political and economic developments as well as matters relating to the India-ASEAN relationship were discussed during the meeting. Proposals were made by India for expanding India-ASEAN cooperation, including in the sectors of science and technology, space applications, health and medicine and agriculture. An agreement on "India-ASEAN Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity" was signed during the Summit.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Prime Minister held bilateral meetings with the leaders of Australia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Singapore and Vietnam. Discussions covered international and regional developments as well as bilateral relations.

(e) Yes, Sir. Discussions took place on developing transport linkages between India and ASEAN.

Functioning of High Commissions of India and Pakistan

*336. SHRI PENUMALLIMADHU: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that both India and Pakistan have taken decision to restore their High Commission staff at New Delhi and Islamabad to the original status;

(b) if so, the reasons for pendency of thousands of applications for visa in our High Commission at Islamabad; and

(c) if not, the reasons and the obstructions in the way of normalising the functioning of the High Commissions in both countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMAD): (a) to (c) In June 2004, India and Pakistan had agreed to restore the strength of their respective High Commissions in New Delhi and Islamabad to the original number of 110 and to reopen the Consulates General in Karachi and Mumbai.