

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 PENUMALLI MADHU:** 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.

[23 December, 2004]

RAJYA SABHA

High Commission of India in Islamabad has issued 7056 visas in September, 6442 in October and 7375 in November this year. These numbers are higher than visas issued before the Mission size had been reduced, following the December 13, 2001 attack on Indian Parliament. There is, however, still a backlog in grant of visas due to the high demand from people in Pakistan wanting to visit India.

Corruption free governance

***337. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI:** Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any short term or long term plan that are both pragmatic and actionable to usher the country into an era of corruption free governance;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI):

(a) and (b) The Government is fully alive to the need to eradicate corruption and effectively implement its policy of 'Zero Tolerance' to corruption. To achieve this goal, the Government had adopted short term and long-term measures. The Government has devised Annual Action Plan to monitor anti-corruption and vigilance activities of various Ministries/Departments. Annual Action Plan has three main features *i.e.* preventive vigilance, surveillance and detection and punitive deterrent action. As regards long-term strategy, the Government endeavors to bring more transparency into the system by various Administrative and Legislative measures.

(c) Does not arise.

Disputes referred by Uttaranchal Government regarding allotment of employees

***338. SHRI HARISH RAWAT:** Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Uttaranchal has referred certain disputed issues to the Central Government for decision with regard to matter of allotment of employees after the formation of the state; and