

activities such as submission of passport applications, taking of digitalized photograph of applicants, collection of bio-metric features and maintenance of national call centre etc. Eleven Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) including four under the Regional Passport Office, Bengaluru, three under Passport Office, Chandigarh and two each under Passport Office, Trichy and Madurai are already operational. The remaining 66 PSKs will be made operational in a phased manner.

Amendment in Haj Committee of India Act

519. SHRI SABIR ALI:

SHRI MOHAMMED ADEEB:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether suggestions/requests have been received for amendment in the Haj Committee of India Act;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the required amendments would be made?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED):

(a) Yes.

(b) Proposals for amendment of Haj Committee Act 2002 include (i) change of nomenclature, (ii) addition of members to the Haj Committee of India (HCOI), (iii) Oversight of Haj tour operators, and (iv) a Consultative mechanism for Haj operations. Other suggestions received from stake holders are also being given due consideration.

(c) Efforts are being made to finalise the submission of the proposed amendments as soon as possible.

Opening of PSKs

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

(a) whether Government had opened many Passport Sewa Kendras (PSKs) across the country in association with private organisation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the employees union of passport offices and staff were against such move; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government to remove their apprehensions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED):

(a) and (b) As part of the implementation of the Passport Seva Project under the e-Governance Plan of the Government of India, it is envisaged to set up 77 Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) across the country. The Project is being implemented in a Public Private Partnership model. Only non-sovereign, non-security and non-sensitive functions have been outsourced to a private Service Provider. These functions include token issuance, initial scrutiny of the application forms, acceptance of fee, scanning of the documents and taking photos and biometrics. Eleven PSKs are operational at present.

(c) All India Passport Employees Association (AIPEA) has conveyed no objection to implementation of the Project with certain observations and suggestions.

(d) The concerns raised by the AIPEA have been addressed within the framework of joint consultative mechanism and through a series of meetings and onsite visits to the PSKs.

Chinese activities in PoK

†521. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as per reports coming from various levels China is continuously increasing its activities in Pakistan occupied Kashmir and has deployed large number of forces in this area;

(b) if so, the details of actions taken by India;

(c) the Government's point of view on this step of China; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED):

(a) to (d) Government is aware that China is executing infrastructure projects in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. Government has raised this issue with the Chinese side and has clearly conveyed India's consistent position that Pakistan has been in illegal occupation of parts of the Indian State of Jammu

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.