

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED):  
(a) to (c) Government pays close attention to China's military modernization programme as well as its infrastructure development projects in the border regions opposite India in the Tibet and Xinjiang Autonomous Regions. Since 1993, the two Governments have maintained peace and tranquility along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the India-China border areas. The two sides have reiterated their commitment to this goal on many occasions. Government is giving careful and special attention to the development of the border areas opposite China, in order to meet our strategic and security requirements and also to facilitate the economic development of these areas. Government keeps a constant watch on all developments having a bearing on India's security and takes all necessary measures to safeguard it.

**Companies exploiting sentiments of haj pilgrims**

†1758. SHRI KAPTAN SINGH SOLANKI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that in the name of Haj, many companies have been exploiting the interests and emotions of Haj pilgrims;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government has issued any guidelines to make Haj pilgrimage more transparent; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED):  
(a) Government is not aware of any such exploitation. Whenever any complaint is received in this regard, the Government will take appropriate action.

(b) Not applicable.

(c) and (d) It is the constant endeavour of Government to conduct the Haj operations in an efficient and transparent manner. Improvements are incorporated on the basis of experience acquired in successive Haj operations with a view to provide the pilgrims with better services in each ensuing Haj pilgrimage.

**Opening of PSKs**

1759. SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether Government is in process for setting up 77 Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) all over the country;

(b) if so, the number of Passport Seva Kendras, those would be opened in Bihar State and the location thereof;

(c) whether time schedule is fixed for functioning of those offices; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

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

(a) Yes.

(b) Under the Passport Seva Project (PSP), one Passport Seva Kendra (PSK) is proposed to be set up in the State of Bihar to be located in Patna.

(c) and (d) As per the tentative schedule, the PSK in Patna is expected to be made operational in January, 2012.

#### **Bilateral partnership with USA and Australia**

1760. SHRI N. BALAGANGA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government envisages a new bilateral partnership with USA and Australia;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether India's economic, political and security aspects have been taken into consideration before entering into any bilateral agreement; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

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

(a) to (d) India is pursuing a global strategic partnership with the United States based on shared values, convergent interests and opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation. India has a strong, broad-based and strategic partnership with Australia. However, Government is not aware of any proposal for a trilateral pact with the United States and Australia.

#### **Meeting on security and Co-operation in Asia**

1761. SHRI N. BALAGANGA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state: