

- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether there have been any discussions with the Chinese authorities recently, at any level; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof, including the steps taken by Government to discuss the border issues with the Chinese authorities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): (a) to (d) India and China have established a Strategic and Cooperative Partnership. In March 2012, President Hu Jintao of the People's Republic of China visited India for the 4th BRICS Summit. PM and President Hu designated the year 2012 as the "Year of India-China Friendship and Cooperation". They held a wide ranging discussion on bilateral ties. EAM has met Chinese Foreign Minister Mr. Yang Jiechi four times this year. Chinese Commerce Minister Mr. Chen Deming was in India on August 26-27, 2012 for discussion with Commerce Minister. The 15th round of talks between the Special Representatives (SRs) of India and China on the Boundary Question took place in New Delhi on January 16-17, 2012. An Agreement on the Establishment of a Working Mechanism on Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs was signed in the presence of the two SRs. The first meeting of this Working Mechanism was successfully held in Beijing on 5-6 March, 2012.

China's interference in the country

†2809. SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware that China is trying to establish an intelligence mechanism in the country besides providing training and weapons to the Naxalites;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government has taken a serious view of the increasing interference of China in India's internal matters;
- (d) if so, whether Government has raised these issues with China; and
- (e) if so, the details of the outcome thereof?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): (a) to (e) Government has taken up the matter of Chinese support to Indian insurgent groups with the Chinese side through diplomatic channel. The Chinese Government has conveyed that it would never support armed groups that are against the Government of India. Government keeps a constant watch on all developments having a bearing on India's security and takes all necessary measures to safeguard it.

Awareness about Sikh identity

2810. SHRI NARESH GUJRAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what specific steps Government intends to take in the light of the recent attacks on a Gurudwara in Wisconsin; and

(b) whether Government intends to take steps to spread awareness regarding the identity of Sikhs, given their mistaken identities by many international communities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): (a) The Government strongly condemned the shooting in the Gurudwara in Wisconsin, United States on 5 August, 2012, and has called for a prompt and full investigation by the U.S. Government into the incident. The Government has also requested the U.S. Government to take all steps to ensure the security of the Indian community and their places of worship in the United States.

(b) The Government attaches highest priority in its diplomatic engagement abroad to promote the safety and security of the Indian community living around the world. As part of its diplomatic efforts, it also seeks to promote a full and accurate understanding of India's religious, cultural and ethnic diversity. The Government has stressed that multi-ethnic and multi-religious countries should not only protect the cultural and religious rights of all sections of their society, but should also make efforts to promote deeper knowledge of and respect for all faiths and cultures.

Issuing of passports

2811. SHRI PANKAJ BORA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state: