

was provided with a preloaded SIM telephone card for use during the course of Haj in Saudi Arabia.

**New dam on Brahmaputra river**

1133. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:

SHRI A. ELAVARASAN:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that China is constructing three new dams over Brahmaputra river whereas it has already constructed one such dam over that river;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that this move of China would bring disaster particularly in the North-Eastern States of the country; and

(d) if so, diplomatic and other actions Government has taken or proposes to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): (a) to (d) The recently released 'Outline of the Twelfth Five Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China' indicates that three more hydropower projects on the main stream of the Brahmaputra River in Tibet Autonomous Region have been approved for implementation by the Chinese authorities. A hydropower project at Zangmu is under construction. Government carefully monitors all developments on the Brahmaputra River. As a lower riparian State with considerable established user rights to the waters of the River, India has conveyed its views and concerns to the Chinese authorities, including at the highest levels of the Government of the People's Republic of China. India has urged China to ensure that the interests of downstream States are not harmed by any activities in upstream areas.

**Expenditure incurred on Ministry's building**

1134. SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the expenditure incurred on building and furnishing the Ministry of External Affairs, new premises at Jawahar Bhawan;

(b) whether the Minister and senior officers have moved into Jawahar Bhawan;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) whether responsibility is being fixed, and if so, on whom, for putting up a building which cannot houses the entire Ministry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): (a) Sir, the total expenditure incurred on the construction and furnishing of the Jawaharlal Nehru Bhawan is Rs. 2,20,60,49,370/-.

(b) and (c) A large number of Divisions including senior officers have moved into Jawaharlal Nehru Bhawan. Office space available in the building is insufficient to accommodate the entire Ministry.

(d) No. The terms and conditions for construction of the Ministry of External Affairs Office premises at Jawaharlal Nehru Bhawan, at the time of allotment of the plot of land to the Ministry, included such conditions as: (i) the architecture, including the facade, ambience etc. shall be in keeping with the other three buildings, viz. the National Museum, the National Archives and the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts; and (ii) Floor Area Ratio (FAR), height, setbacks shall be restricted to that for "social and cultural" usage. This would restrict FAR to 100 and height to 26 meters. These conditions imposed restrictions on the construction plans of the Ministry.

#### **Outsourcing of visa handling process**

1135. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has outsourced the visa handling process in many of its Embassies and Consulates;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether outsourcing of visa handling process is a security risk; and

(d) if so, the steps Government has taken to ensure no lapses in the process; and

(e) the details thereof?