

their personal particulars, to avoid incidences of impersonation and duplicity. Verification of documents and granting of passports is also done in the presence of passport applicants. Accordingly, citizens from Meghalaya are required to travel to PSK, Guwahati for completion of requisite formalities for issue of passports.

(b) to (d) With a view to extend the passport issuance network, Government is working on setting up Passport Seva Laghu Kendras (PSLKs) at various locations in the country including Shillong.

#### **US NSA Spying on Indian Embassy**

522. SHRI M. P. ACHUTHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the media report that the US National Security Agency (NSA) spied on Indian Embassy and considered it a "target" along with 37 other embassies and missions in Washington; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): (a) and (b) Government is aware of media reports stating that the U.S. National Security Agency spied on 38 diplomatic missions of foreign countries, including the Indian Embassy in Washington DC, by implanting bugs and using specialized antennae. Government has expressed concerns over the reports of monitoring of the Indian Embassy by U.S. agencies. On Government's advice, the Indian Embassy in Washington DC raised these concerns with the U.S. Department of State.

#### **Irregularities in passport office in Kerala**

523. SHRI M. P. ACHUTHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been complaints about the Malappuram passport officer (Kerala) regarding irregularities in issuing passports and his office was raided by CBI recently;

(b) whether the said officer is alleged to have involved in the human trafficking of women to Gulf countries, if so, the details thereof; and