

exchanged perceptions of threat emanating from terrorism and emphasised their determination to fight the menace. They also discussed elements of regional and global terrorist threats, respective national counter terrorism strategies, state sponsored terrorism and need to strengthen bilateral and international cooperation to counter this threat.

(b) and (c) India and Israel agreed to enhance dialogue and co-operation in the area of counter terrorism and agreed to work towards finalisation of agreements on Cooperation in Homeland and Public Security Issues, Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters and Protection of Classified Materials and Information.

Permanent observers in Arctic Council

2380. SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India along with China and Japan has asked to be Permanent Observers in the Arctic Council of eight countries that have Arctic Territory; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): (a) and (b) Yes. India, alongwith China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Italy and Singapore, was granted Observer status in the Arctic Council during its Ministerial Meeting held in Kiruna, Sweden on May, 15 2013.

The Arctic Council now is composed of 8 member states (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and USA), 6 Permanent Participants, 12 Observer states (France, Germany, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, UK, China, India, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea and Singapore). In addition, 9 inter-governmental and inter-Parliamentary organizations and 11 non-governmental organisations have been accorded Observer Status.

PSKs in Andhra Pradesh

2381. SHRI C.M. RAMESH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) existing in the State of Andhra Pradesh; and