

(c) to (e) Sovereignty over South China Sea is disputed between many countries in the region. India is not a party to this dispute. China, which is a party to the South China Sea dispute, has raised its concerns on India's hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation projects in the South China Sea off the coast of Vietnam. Government has clearly conveyed that such activity by Indian companies is purely commercial in nature. India's position on South China Sea issue is consistent and has been reiterated bilaterally and in multilateral fora on several occasions. India supports freedom of navigation in international waters while maintaining that sovereignty issues must be resolved peacefully by the countries which are parties to the dispute in accordance with accepted principles of international law, including United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982.

Reviewing of ineffective MoUs

1288. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is proposing to review the ineffective MoUs signed by the Government of India with various countries, if so, the details thereof;

(b) the number of MoUs that were converted into agreement and the MoUs that were not converted into agreements; and

(c) the reasons for the status quo?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [(GENERAL (RETD.) V.K. SINGH)]: (a) It is understood that the Cabinet Secretariat is in the process of reviewing MoUs signed by the Government of India with foreign countries in consultation with line Ministries. As far as the Ministry of External Affairs is concerned, reviewing of MoUs is an ongoing exercise.

(b) None.

(c) There is no practice of changing the 'form' of an existing MoU.

Achievements of passport melas

1289. SHRI PARIMAL NATHWANI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether large number of applicants who have applied for issue of passports are facing lot of difficulties in getting their appointments in Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) and also in getting their passports;