

Police Headquarters (DPHQs). In addition, the Ministry has recently launched mPassport Police App for speedy submission of Police Verification Report. The App would facilitate the field level verification officers to directly capture the PV report into the system digitally. With the launch of this App, the need to download and print the physical Personal Particular Form and Questionnaire would no longer be required resulting in paperless end-to-end digital flow of the PV process, further reducing the time required for completion of PVR. To further expedite the time taken in issuance of Passports, Ministry has taken the initiative to leverage the DigiLocker platform created under “Digital India” program. Under this initiative, Ministry would leverage and validate with Crime Control Tracking and Network System (CCTNS) database for verification of criminal antecedents once CCTNS database is onboard in DigiLocker platform.

India's foreign policy towards Iran

828. SHRI DEREK O'BRIEN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there would be a recalibration in India's foreign policy related to Iran now that international sanctions on Iran have been removed, if so, details thereof; and

(b) whether India would have active engagement with Iran in economic arena now if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GENERAL (RETD.) V. K. SINGH]: (a) and (b) India and Iran have traditionally enjoyed close, friendly and cooperative bilateral ties rooted in deep historical, cultural and civilisational links. In recent years, bilateral ties have been characterized by frequent interactions at the highest levels.

India welcomed the announcement of lifting of nuclear-related sanctions against Iran in January 2016. External Affairs Minister, in a letter to her Iranian counterpart, stated that the milestone represented triumph of diplomacy and signalled a new chapter of peace, progress and prosperity for Iran and our region opening up vast opportunities for our two countries to expand their ongoing mutually beneficial cooperation in a number of spheres including energy infrastructure and regional connectivity.

India has active engagement with Iran in the economic sphere. The meeting between Prime Minister and President of Iran Dr. Hassan Rouhani in Ufa, Russia on 9 July 2015 provided a broad roadmap for further developing bilateral relations, including in the economic sphere. This meeting was followed by the visit of Minister

of Foreign Affairs of Iran in August 2015, which built on the momentum generated at Ufa. External Affairs Minister co-chaired Joint Commission Meeting with Minister of Economy and Finance of Iran on 28 December 2015 in New Delhi. In the Joint Commission Meeting, which was preceded by meetings of Joint Working Groups on Trade, Infrastructure and Energy, several decisions to strengthen bilateral economic cooperation were taken. They pertain to, *inter-alia*, India's involvement in the Chahbahar port development and exploration of natural gas in Farzad B field etc.

A contract between Indian Special Purpose Vehicle and Arya Bander of Iran for development of Chahbahar Port is finalised. Government approved credit of USD 150 million to Iran for development of Chahbahar Port. Requisite credit by EXIM Bank for beginning supply of 2.5 lakh tonne of steel rails under contracts negotiated by State Trading Corporation (STC) was also approved in January 2016. Indian oil companies are in negotiation with their Iranian counterparts for investment in Farzad B upstream project. Negotiations on an Agreement on India-Iran-Afghanistan Trilateral Transit Corridor have made progress and the next meeting of experts to finalise the clauses will be held in India shortly.

Relevant authorities of the two countries are in close touch with each other regarding several aspects of bilateral banking relations and transaction mechanisms in the wake of lifting of some of the international sanctions against Iran.

Production targets set by BHEL

†829. SHRI MEGHRAJ JAIN: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of production targets set by Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) during the last two years, yearwise;

(b) the production targets achieved in last two years and the current financial year;

(c) the details of the posts lying vacant from 2014-15 in BHEL and whether these posts have been filled; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor and by when these posts are likely to be filled?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI G.M. SIDDESHWARA): (a) and (b) The production targets and corresponding achievements thereto of Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.