

[15 July, 2004]

RAJYA SABHA

(c) whether Government would take steps to open a passport office in Mangalore?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes;

(b) The number of applications received from Dakshina Kannada and Udupi Districts during the year 2003 was 26,709 which is 18.4% of the total 1,46,399 applications received in Passport Office Bangalore.

(c) No. Due to several constraints including shortage of staff, the Government is not in a position to open a Passport Office in Mangalore. In addition, as per existing guidelines as recommended by Parliamentary Standing Committee, there should be at least 50,000 applications from an area for opening a Passport Office and thus, Mangalore does not qualify for a Passport Office. Moreover, as part of scheme to decentralise submission of passport applications to district level, the Government has asked the State Government to open District Passport Cells (DPCs) in each district. Apart from a Passport Application Collection Centre in Mangalore, there are 13 DPCs in Karnataka.

Creation of new posts in ministry

421. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:

SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to create new posts such as Foreign Services Inspector, Additional Secretary (International Organisations), Additional Secretary (International Security) in the Ministry of External Affairs;

(b) whether Government are also thinking of creating a new Division for Euro-Asia; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) On 4th February, 2004, the Ministry of External Affairs carried out redistribution of work at Additional Secretary level at Headquarters and new designations have been given to the officers. Additional Secretary (Administration) was redesignated as Additional Secretary (Human Resources). In addition

to the present allocation of work, Additional Secretary (Human Resources) was also appointed as Foreign Service Inspector. Additional Secretary (Coordinator for Counter Terrorism) was redesignated as Additional Secretary (International Security). The post of Additional Secretary (International Organisations) existed even earlier.

(b) As part of the reorganization of the work distribution in the Ministry, a new Divisions called 'Eurasia' was also created.

(c) The Eurasia Division mainly comprises of Central Asian countries and Russia. At present, the Eurasia Division consists of the following countries:

(i) Azerbaijan (ii) Armenia (iii) Belarus (iv) Georgia (v) Kazakhstan (vi) Kyrgyzstan (vii) Russian Federation (viii) Tajikistan (ix) Turkmenistan (x) Ukraine and (xi) Uzbekistan.

Talk on Proliferation between India and US

422. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether next round of talk on proliferation between India and US has started in the month of April, 2004;

(b) whether US Secretary during his visit had invited India to join PSI which has currently 14 members;

(c) whether all the doubts of the Indian side in this regard have been cleared by US; and

(d) if so, to what extent both countries have agreed to have proliferation talk?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) to (d) Officials from India and the United States have held discussions on diverse issues on the non-proliferation agenda. The last round of these discussions was held in Washington on 31 March 2004. Discussions have been held with the US side on the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), including during the visit of US Secretary of State Colin Powell to New Delhi from 16-18 March 2004. In these discussions, Government has been guided by considerations related to legitimacy of actions under the Proliferation Security Initiative and their grounding in international law.