

system which is required for manufacture of e-passports. Manufacture of e-passport will commence on the successful completion of the tendering and procurement process by ISP, Nashik.

The personal particulars of the applicants would be digitally signed and stored in the chip. In case, anyone tampers with the chip, the system shall be able to identify it and resulting in the failure of the passport authentication. Access of information is protected in a way that the chip cannot be read without physical possession of the passport.

(c) The process of issuance of passports has been made foolproof under the Passport Seva System. Before granting any passport, in-person appearance is mandatory avoiding chances of impersonation. Background check is carried out from the entire passport database for duplication and criminality status. Capture of Biometric data and photograph on the spot and matching of biometric data with Aadhar database (fully integrated since August, 2015) also ensure issuance of the passport to the right person. Police Verification of personal particulars and antecedents of applicants including address, where required, is very critical for the issue of passports. All these measures and precautions available in the system have made the passport issuance process foolproof.

With the introduction of advanced security features in recent years, possibilities of issuance of fake Indian passports have been eliminated. However, forgery cases, whenever reported, are duly investigated by this Ministry in co-operation with the Ministry of Home Affairs and the concerned police authorities.

Grant to Institute of Chinese Studies

2413. SHRI K. R. ARJUNAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has recently cut grants to India's premier Institute of Chinese Studies this year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that a new director of the institute is yet to be selected; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI M. J. AKBAR): (a) and (b) The Ministry of External Affairs extends support to various institutes for their research projects and other activities related to chinese

studies. The Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS), which is an independent registered society, is one such institute. Apart from financial assistance from this Ministry, the Institute has also been funded by other Government and non-Government entities. The financial assistance received by ICS from this Ministry for the current FY (2016-17) will come to an end on 31 March 2017. The institute has been advised to submit proposals for research projects and activities, based on the merits of which the exact quantum of financial support to the institute by this Ministry for the next FY (2017-18) will be decided.

(c) and (d) According to information available with this Ministry, ICS has selected a candidate to serve as the next Director on expiry of the term of the current incumbent.

Talk on Indus Water issues with Pakistan

2414. SHRI K. R. ARJUNAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has signaled to Pakistan that India is willing to commence the talk on Indus Water issue;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that India has communicated to Pakistan that there is no reason that the two countries could not sort out their differences on Indus Water as they had in the past; and

(d) if so, the response from Pakistan in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI M. J. AKBAR): (a) to (d) At the invitation of his Pakistan counterpart, the Commissioner (Indus) of India will participate in the 113th meeting of Permanent Indus Commission (PIC), scheduled to be held in Pakistan on 20-21 March 2017. PIC was established in accordance with the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), 1960 between India and Pakistan. The Treaty mandates the PIC to maintain cooperative arrangement for the implementation of the Treaty and to promote co-operation between the two sides for the development of the waters systems. The Treaty also mandates the PIC to meet at least once a year alternately in India and Pakistan. The forthcoming meeting of PIC is a regular Treaty-mandated meeting. The IWT has been the cornerstone of the sharing of waters of the river Indus and its tributaries between India and Pakistan, and the Government remains committed to addressing all matters within the Treaty's purview bilaterally with Pakistan through appropriate mechanisms in accordance with the IWT.