

[27 April, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

including in the nuclear weapons and missile development programme. We have made known our concerns to the Chinese side.

Passport Adalats In Karnataka

3573.SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Passport Adalats have been conducted in Karnataka; and
- (b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) yes, Sir.

(b) The Bangalore Passport Office held Passport Adalats on every Wednesday between May and August, 1999. As cases were cleared the frequency of the Adalats was reduced to alternate Wednesdays till all the cases were cleared. In December, 1999 an Adalat-cum-passport camp was held at Dharwad and in February, 2000 in Mysore.

Extradition of Militants Released in Exchange of Hijacked Plane

3574.SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government have made efforts to get hardcore militants back to India who were released in exchange of the passengers of hijacked plane at Kandhar;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) what is the reaction from other side in this behalf?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) to (c) Following the safe release of all hostages of IC-814, Government raised the matter of the hijacking and the released terrorists with the Government of Pakistan. Pakistan was reminded of its obligations under the Simla Agreement of 1972, according to which it had a legal obligation to prevent the organisation, assistance or encouragement of any acts detrimental to the maintenance of peace and harmonious relations. It

was also pointed out that the terrorist whose release was secured by the hijackers after threatening the lives of the hostages and killing one of them, had made their appearance in Pakistan.

The released terrorists belong to terrorist groups that openly operate from Pakistani territory. The international community has also openly acknowledged the existence of such armed groups involved in terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir.

Since the military coup, Pakistan has, been enhancing its state sponsorship of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere in India.

News Caption "India is Not a Soft State"

3575. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "India is not a soft state" as reported in the Times of India, on the 24th January, 2000;

(b) if so, whether Government agree with its content;

(c) whether it is a fact that a country like India cannot be kept out of the security Council;

(d) if so, whether the steps taken by Government are gaining ground; and

(e) if so, what extent?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. Government of India is aware of the news item titled 'India is not a soft State' as reported in the Times of India dated 24.1.2000 and agrees with its contents.

(c) to (e) It is generally recognised that by any objective criteria whether of economic vibrancy, political maturity, size of the population or contribution to the activities of the UN relating to maintenance of peace and security, India is a natural and deserving candidate. However, general agreement is yet to be reached in discussions in the UN on expansion and reform of the Security Council.

India's candidature has been endorsed publicly in the UN by several countries. Statements of support have also been made by many countries during bilateral discussions.