

level meeting between Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and President Musharraf at Agra, in July 2001. '

Pakistan in its responses, usually reiterates the general position that it undertakes to apprehend and prosecute any person or persons found on its territory or the territory of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir who may be suspected of having committed such offences related to hijacking. However, they also, at the same time, reject our demarche. Pakistan's general commitment is therefore of little value.

Violence against Sikhs

1280. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in the aftermath of terrorists attacks in the U.S., violence against Sikhs has spread in U.S., Europe, Australia and New Zealand mistaking Sikhs as Arab terrorists;

(b) If so, the number of cases of such violence, reported against Sikhs in U.S., Europe, Australia and New Zealand, separately, during the month of September, 2001; and

(c) The preventive steps taken by Government?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH):

(a) to (c) Some incidents of harassment including verbal abuse and violence against Indian nationals, particularly the Sikh community were reported from USA, Canada, United Kingdom and Australia. These incidents were not the result of any hostility against the Sikh community but of mistaken identity because of their outward appearance and resemblance with Arabs. The only loss of life occurred in USA where one Sikh, Shri Balbir Singh Sodhi was shot dead in the City of Mesa (Arizona) on September 15, 2001. An American national, Frank Roque has been arrested and charged with murder of Shri Sodhi.

The Indian Missions/Posts in all the affected countries immediately took up this issue with the authorities at the Federal, State and local levels. During his telephonic conversation with the President of USA on 16.9.2001, Prime Minister expressed his concern about the attacks on the members of the Sikh community and was assured that the Government of USA would do its utmost to prevent such attacks.

The Government of the countries affected by these incidents of harassment against the Sikhs were prompt in responding to the situation and there are no reports of any new such incidents.

Refusal by Pakistan to accept relief for Afghani Refugees

1281. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India's plan to send humanitarian assistance to Afghan refugees in Pakistan received a jolt when Pakistan informed India that it did not have adequate storage capacity for relief material;

(b) if so, whether now India has decided to sent one million tonnes of wheat, medicines, quilts and blankets etc. through areas held by the Northern Alliance and to refugees in Iran; and

(c) If so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH):

(a) to (c) As part of our commitment to ameliorate the condition of Afghan people, the Government has committed to offer humanitarian assistance for internally and externally displaced Afghans and others, in need, including through provision of one million tonnes of wheat. As part of our commitment, we had proposed to send to the Afghan refugees in Pakistan, through the Government of Pakistan, a consignment of wheat. Government of Pakistan indicated that it had sufficient stocks of wheat, and faced problems related to storage facilities.

Government is in touch with several countries as well as with various UN agencies, including the World Food Programme and is engaged in working out the modalities for sending humanitarian assistance of wheat and other items to the Afghan people as early as possible. Recently, two consignments of medical relief material of the quantum of over forty tonnes were dispatched for Afghan people.

Extradition of Indian Terrorists from Pakistan

1282. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have demanded from the Pakistan Government to hand over certain terrorists to India to stand trial;