

and their extremist allies. The London Conference did not endorse reintegration with the Taliban as a whole. It welcomed the plans of the Government of Afghanistan to offer an honourable place in society to those willing to renounce violence, participate in the free and open society and respect the principles that are enshrined in the Afghan Constitution, cut ties with Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups, and pursue their political goals peacefully. India will continue to consult with countries in the region and beyond and to press the international community to act effectively to ensure that terrorist and extremist groups targeting Afghanistan from beyond its borders are denied safe havens.

Delisting of Taliban leaders

323. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that certain important Taliban leaders have been delisted by the UN from prohibited persons' list involved in spread of global terrorist network;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government has taken up the issue with the UN opposing such a step; and
- (d) if so, the response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA): (a) and (b) In response to a long pending request from the Afghan Government, the UN Security Council (UNSC) Al-Qaeda and Taliban Sanctions Committee approved the delisting of five individuals from the UNSC 1267 sanctions list on January 25, 2010. These former members of the Taliban regime are 'Finance Minister' Wakil Ahmad Mutawakil, 'Deputy Minister of Commerce' Fazl Mohammad Faizan Qamaruddin, 'Deputy Minister of Frontier Affairs' Abdul Hakim Monib Mohammad Nazar, 'Deputy Minister of Planning' Mohammad Musa Hottak Abdul Mehdi and Shams-us-Safa Aminzai, an official of the Taliban 'Foreign Ministry' press centre.

(c) and (d) India is not a member of the UNSC Al-Qaeda and Taliban Sanctions Committee. The Government of India has consistently conveyed to its international partners that it is necessary for the international community to show unwavering commitment in resolutely opposing, resisting and overcoming terrorism and those who nurture, sustain and give sanctuary to terrorists and extremist elements.

Foreign Secretary level talks with Pakistan

324. SHRI D. RAJA:

SHRI R.C. SINGH:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has offered Pakistan open-ended talks at Foreign Secretary level on all outstanding issues affecting peace and security including counter-terrorism; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of Pakistan thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA): (a) and (b) Foreign Secretary level talks between India and Pakistan are scheduled to be held in New Delhi on February 25, 2010. The proposed talks will focus essentially on India's core concerns regarding terrorism.

Change in visa rules by Australia

325. SHRI PRABHAT JHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government accepts that it would become quite a difficult task for Indian students going to Australia due to the changes made by Australian Government in their visa rules;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has reported its objection to Australian Government;

(d) if so, the assurance/reaction received from Australian Government in this regard; and

(e) if not, by when Government would report its objection to Australian Government?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA): (a) and (b) With a view to stamp out fraud and ensure that students have the financial capacity to live and study in Australia, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), Government of Australia announced (August, 2009) strengthening of checks on student visa applications. The targeted measures, which will address the potential for document fraud and other issues around financial capacity, identification and bona fides, include:

- Upgrading the interview programme to build a strong evidence base around fraud;
- Removing or restricting e-Visa access for some agents where there is evidence of fraud or inactivity, and
- Restricting access to e-Visa for some segments of the caseload if analysis demonstrates restricted access would allow for better control of fraud;

Also the DIAC has announced the increase in financial requirement with effect from 01 January 2010, for overseas students to at least \$ 18,000 a year instead of the current \$ 12,000, besides the cost of tuition fees, travel cost and cost of any dependents and DIAC will make an assessment on whether the funds demonstrated by students will be available to them while they are in Australia.

On 08 February 2010, Senator Chris Evans, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship announced an overhaul of the general skilled migration programme in Australia. The major reforms to the programme are: