

(b) whether keeping this in view we expect US support to our policy of considering Pakistan a stronghold of terrorism;

(c) the place of terrorism to which India considers the US in referring Pakistan as a collaborator; and

(d) whether any response of Afghanistan and Iran has come to the knowledge or has been received in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED):
(a) to (c) During her visit to India from 18 to 21 July, 2011, the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton described Pakistan as a key ally in the context of the U.S. campaign against Al-Qaeda and its affiliates. Secretary Clinton also called on Pakistan to confront violent extremism of all sorts. She emphasized that no terrorists should be given safe havens and free pass by any Government.

The United States shares India's views, as reiterated during the second India-U.S. Strategic Dialogue held in New Delhi on 19 July, 2011, that regional and global security requires elimination of safe havens and infrastructure for terrorism and violent extremism in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Condemning terrorism in all its forms, the two sides reiterated that all terrorist networks must be defeated and called for Pakistan to move expeditiously in prosecuting those involved in the November, 2008 Mumbai terror attack.

India and the United States have a deepening cooperation in counter-terrorism, including intelligence sharing, cooperation in investigation and capacity building. The ninth meeting of Joint Working Group on Counter-terrorism was held in March, 2011 in New Delhi and the two sides launched the Homeland Security Dialogue in May, 2011 in New Delhi.

(d) Afghan Government has stated on a number of occasions that the source of terrorism/terrorist sanctuaries lies across the border in Pakistan.

Problems of Haj pilgrims

2509. SHRIMATI NAZNIN FARUQUE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that about 1,72,000 Indian pilgrims go for Haj every year;

(b) whether Indian Haj pilgrims are facing a lot of trouble and inconvenience during their journey to Saudi Arabia;

(c) the number of Haj pilgrims who went on Haj for the last three years from North-East States;

(d) if so, the details of difficulties faced by the pilgrims; and

(e) the steps taken by Government to stop their inconvenience?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED):

(a) Yes.

(b) to (e) It is the constant endeavour of the Government and the Haj Committee of India to keep making improvements in the arrangements for the Haj pilgrims and provide them with better facilities after taking into account the feedback received from all concerned. Some complaints are received from the pilgrims and issues raised therein are dealt with in the best possible manner. The number of pilgrims who performed Haj from North East States during last three years is tabulated below:-

Name of States	Haj-2008	Haj-2009	Haj-2010
Assam	3021	3057	3674
Manipur	359	268	307
Tripura	111	60	103

Irregularities in RPO, Ghaziabad

2510. SHRI MOHAMMED ADEEB: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of complaint letters of MPs received in the Ministry regarding irregularities, corruption and harassment in Regional Passport Office, Ghaziabad;

(b) the action taken on these complaints;

(c) the reasons that a call made in the landline telephone in Passport Office, Ghaziabad has not been replied;

(d) the action that has been taken by the Ministry to ensure that the landline telephone would be answered by concern officer or staff;

(e) the number of officers and staff who are working for more than three years continuously in Regional Passport Office, Ghaziabad;