

[8 December, 2005]

RAJYA SABHA

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Abduction and murder of Indian Driver in Afghanistan

1705. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY:
SHRI DATTA MEGHE:
SHRI R. KAMARAJ:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether an Indian driver with the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) involved in construction of highways in Afghanistan has been abducted alongwith three Afghan co-workers by the Talibans on 19th November, 2005 and murdered later;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the demand put forth by Talibans to release the Indian driver; and

(c) the measures which had been taken by Government for his safe release before he was murdered and also to check recurrence of such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, Shri Maniyappan Raman Kutty s/o Shri Ramankutty resident of Puthen Veetil, Thekathil House, P.O. Chingoli, District Alleppey (kerala) holder of official Passport No.O-1116062 issued at New Delhi on October 24,2005, was posted as a driver with Border Roads Organistaion (BRO), on Zaranj-Deiaram road construction project in Zaranj (Afghanistan). He was abducted on November 19,2005 while returning from Gurguri to Minar in Nimroz province of Afghanistan. Three Afghans travelling with him were also abducted. The next day, in a telephone call to a news agency, the Taliban spokesperson claimed responsibility for the abduction and demanded the withdrawal of the BRO from Afghanistan within 48 hours. Later, the body of Shri Maniyappan was recovered near Minar on November 23,2005.

(c) The Government of India made every effort possible to seek release of Shri Raman Kutty in cooperation with Afghan authorities. We also worked with our own wide network of contacts in Afghanistan for this purpose. Unfortunately, these efforts were unsuccessful.

In order to prevent recurrence of such incidents, Embassy of India in Kabul has already issued a security advisory containing appropriate

guidelines to organizations/projects in which Indians are working in Afghanistan. The Government of Afghanistan has also taken steps to increase the security provided to Indian personnel and secure more effectively all project sites where Indian nationals are working.

Holocaust Memorial Day

1706. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether on 1 st November, 2005, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution, declaring '27th January¹ to be observed from next year as 'Holocaust Memorial Day' to commemorate liberation of the Nazi concentration camp at Aushwitz, Poland, which had witnessed killing more than one million people;

(b) whether it is a fact that India has not registered its support to the UN Resolution;

(c) if so, the rationale behind said stand of the Government; and

(d) which other countries have restrained from supporting the Resolution at the UN General Assembly?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. On 1st November, 2005, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on "Holocaust Remembrance" which decided to designate 27th January as an annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust.

(b) No., Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The resolution was adopted by consensus.

Pre-Condition for repatriation of Abu Salem

†1707. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have accepted any conditions for repatriation of Abu Salem from Portugal, who is the main alleged in Mumbai bomb blast;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.