

proposal to designate Masood Azhar has been made to the Committee by the United States, UK and France. China, has once again placed a hold on the proposal. As per the working guidelines of the 1267 Committee decisions are taken collectively on the basis of the consensus principle, no individual member of the Committee is required to provide a public explanation for its views.

Government has raised this issue with China, including at the highest levels, and has pointed out that China's position on listing of well known terrorists under the 1267 Sanctions regime should be in consonance with its stated position on terrorism.

According to recent media reports, while answering a query on Pakistan's decision to put Lashkar-e-Taiba [LeT]/Jamaat-ud-Dawa [JuD] chief Hafiz Saeed under house detention in January this year, Pakistan's Defence Minister is reported to have said that "Hafiz Saeed is a danger to our society also".

Government is firmly resolved to take all necessary measures to defeat the scourge of terrorism and to ensure the safety and security of our citizens.

Regional Passport Office at Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh

1614. SHRI T. G. VENKATESH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is planning to establish a Regional Passport Office in Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details and the status thereof; and

(c) by what time the passport office would be established and the reasons for the delay, if any?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GENERAL (RETD.) V. K. SINGH]: (a) and (b) The Government has established a Passport Office at Vijayawada. Necessary notification is being issued to this effect. An officer has also been appointed to head the Passport Office at Vijayawada.

(c) The Passport Office is temporarily operating out of the premises of the Passport Seva Kendra at Vijayawada. As soon as suitable premises are located, the Passport Office would be shifted into it.

Mortal bodies of Indians lying in Saudi Arabia

1615. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that hundreds of bodies of persons from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh are piling up at mortuaries in Saudi Arabia for nearly a year as

families are unable to bring them back for the last rites;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to discuss the matter with the concerned authorities and facilitate early dispatch of bodies to their homes for the last rites?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GENERAL (RETD.) V. K. SINGH]: (a) and (b) No. There are currently only 02 dead bodies registered from Andhra Pradesh and 5 from Telangana with the Embassy of India at Riyadh for which No Objection Certificates (NOCs) have already been issued. In addition, 04 death cases have also been reported from Andhra Pradesh and 03 from Telangana for which formal documents are still awaited that will enable the Embassy to issue the NOCs.

(c) While dealing with death cases of Indian nationals in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Indian Mission/Consulate in Saudi Arabia provide assistance on a proactive basis from informing the next of kin to facilitating the disposal of mortal remains either by local burial or transportation to India, in coordination with the sponsors. Death documents are attested and other assistance provided even beyond office hours and on holidays. The Indian Mission also pays the transportation charges for the mortal remains wherever applicable. Our Missions also keep bringing the delayed cases to the notice of the Saudi authorities on regular basis for early dispatch of the mortal remains. The death cases are also regularly taken up by senior officers of the Mission during meetings in the Foreign Office and other related offices. The issues pertaining to death cases are also taken up during the bilateral Consular meetings from time to time.

Passport to militancy affected families

1616. SHRI NAZIR AHMED LAWAY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what steps have been taken by Government to provide passports to the family members of the militancy affected families;

(b) whether Government has issued directions to the State Police department for dealing with such cases sensitively;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the details of Government policy in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GENERAL (RETD.) V. K. SINGH]: (a) to (c) The Government has not prescribed