

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
QUESTION NO 22.12.2005
ANSWERED ON
INDIAN SENTENCED IN SAUDI ARABIA

3256

SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-

- (a) whether Government are aware that Indian nationals are facing various charges and sentences in Saudi Arabia as on today;
- (b) if so, whether it is a fact that Indian National from Kerala are facing the sentence of `left eye to be scooped out`;
- (c) if so, the details including the steps taken to save the citizen from the above sentence, if any; and
- (d) the number of Indian nationals in the jails of Saudi Arabia and action taken to examine their cases?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a) Yes.

(b) According to media reports, Mr. Abdul Lateef Naushad, an Indian national has been sentenced by a Saudi Court that his eye should be removed due to an incident involving him and a Saudi citizen in which the latter lost his eyesight.

(c) Details of the case, as per media reports and a petition received from Mr. Naushad`s wife, are that on 1 April 2003, a Saudi national, Mr. Naif Al-Otaibi, came to buy a battery charger from the Delta Petrol Station in Dammam, Saudi Arabia, where Mr. Naushad was working. There was an argument between the two over the purchase of the battery charger and in the scuffle that followed, the Saudi national`s eye got injured. Doctors who examined the injured eye subsequently reported that he had lost his eyesight. Naushad was arrested and in the judgement after investigations, the Dammam Court issued a verdict that his eye should be taken out as demanded by the Saudi victim as a quid pro quo for losing his eye. On 5 December 2005, the Ambassador of India to Saudi Arabia sent a Mercy Petition to the highest authority, His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia requesting him for grant of Royal Pardon. Ambassador also sent separate Mercy Petitions to the Governor of Dammam (where the incident took place and where the Indian is imprisoned now) as well as the Governor of Riyadh (as the case may finally be decided in the High Court in Riyadh). An Embassy representative was rushed to Dammam jail on 8 December 2005 where the jail authorities confirmed the imprisonment of Mr. Naushad. A formal request for consular access has also been submitted to the local authorities. The Saudi Ambassador in Delhi was also invited on 8 December 2005 to the Ministry of External Affairs and requested to use his good offices to help resolve the problem.

(d) As per intimation received from the Government of Saudi Arabia, 1444 Indian nationals were imprisoned in 2004 and this year (as on 9 Dec 2005), 1104 Indians have been imprisoned. Even though intervention by diplomatic missions in cases under investigation is not allowed in Saudi Arabia, our Mission approaches the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs for arranging consular access as soon as intimation about imprisonment of any Indian national is received. In addition, during the holy month of Ramadan, the Mission also sends formal requests for Royal Pardon for release of Indian prisoners on humanitarian grounds. The number of Indian prisoners granted Royal pardon, except in case of capital punishment, in the last few years are given as follows:

1999-2000	535
2000	359
2001	563
2002	585
2003-04	392

In cases of payment of blood money, when poverty is proved, the Mission submits Mercy Petitions for release of the concerned detainees. In cases where the Mission comes to know of any Indian citizen who has been awarded the death sentence, the Mission approaches the Saudi authorities at the highest level with Mercy Petitions for their release or for a lesser punishment.