

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
QUESTION NO 18.11.2010
ANSWERED ON
INDIAN WOMAN DYING ON MUSCAT AIRPORT .

975

SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA

Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-

- (a) whether an Indian woman was stranded for four days at Muscat airport as she lost her passport and then died at the airport itself;
- (b) whether the nearest Indian Mission made any effort to rescue her;
- (c) whether it is a fact that the Indian Mission could not help her or give her some documents or give relief in any way;
- (d) whether Government has held an enquiry into the whole affair; and
- (e) the steps proposed to ensure that such incidents do not occur again?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS

(SHRI VAYALAR RAVI)

(a) :Yes, Sir. An Indian housemaid Ms. Beebi Lumada died in Oman, while being taken from Muscat Airport to Ibn Sina Psychiatric Hospital on 8th October, 2010. Ms. Beebi Lumada was flying to Chennai on 3rd October, 2010 by Qatar Airways (QA) after her sponsor decided to send her back and cancelled her Omani visa. QA claimed that her passport was found missing at Doha by the Immigration Authorities. As a result she was sent back to Muscat.

(b) to (e): As per existing procedure the Airlines should have contacted the Indian Mission in Doha to issue her an emergency certificate and her stay at Doha Airport extended by 24 hours as per standard operating procedures of the Airlines. Further the Airlines used her Doha-Chennai voucher to send her back to Muscat even though she did not have a valid visa for Oman or valid travel document. QA at Muscat Airport later got in touch with EOI officials to provide her an emergency certificate in the absence of a passport. As per Government regulations, an emergency certificate, which is a document issued in such cases, requires a missing passport report. QA and Airport Police were both asked to send the passport details and name of the Indian national in writing and the missing passport report from airport immigration. This is also a standard operating procedure of airlines, which was not followed. Despite repeated reminders from the Indian Embassy staff to the airlines as well as the airport police, no report or communication was sent to the Embassy either orally or in writing. Ms. Lumada was kept under the watch of the immigration officials in a separate cordoned off area at the airport. The airlines promised that she will be brought to the Embassy to prove her Indian identity, but failed to do so. Thursday, the 7th October, and Friday, the 8th October, were holidays in Oman. Despite the holiday period, the Embassy of India, tried its best to reach the authorities asking them to provide either a missing passport report or a written communication on this issue or to bring Ms. Lumada to the Embassy.

At no point of time either the QA or the police authorities at the airport informed the Embassy that Ms. Beebi Lumada was unwell or suffering from hysteria, as the report of the Ibn sina Hospital, where she was brought dead on the evening of 8th October, 2010, states. Her condition deteriorated rapidly on 8th October, 2010 and the Embassy was informed that the police were taking her to the Ibn Sina Hospital in the evening of 8th October, 2010.

The airlines then passed on the task of getting a post mortem done and sending the body back home on to the Embassy. QA refused to fly the dead body to India on a no cost basis. The Embassy, however, made arrangements for the body to be flown to India and all expenditure on this account was borne by the Embassy. The Embassy also got in touch with her next of kin in this regard.

This issue was taken up with the Qatar Airways at Doha and Muscat and the Immigration officials at both airports in order to avoid recurrence of such incidents. Ministry of External Affairs had deputed a senior officer to enquire and gather further facts regarding the case and steps have been taken and instructions

issued to our missions abroad to ensure that such incidents do not recur in the future.