

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2829
ANSWERED ON:10.05.2006
CARTOON CONTROVERSY
Owaisi Shri Asaduddin

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is large scale protest world over including in India against publication of cartoons of Prophet Mohammed in a Danish newspaper;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether India has taken up the matter with the Danish Government;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken or being taken by the Danish Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA)

(a) & (b) Yes Sir. Protests took place across the world, with deaths reported in Nigeria, Libya, Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Danish and Norwegian Embassies in Damascus and Consulate in Beirut were torched. Ambassadors of Muslim countries based in Copenhagen submitted protest letters to the Danish Government. Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Libya had recalled their ambassadors in protest. Protests have also taken place in several parts of India on the issue.

(c) & (d) Yes Sir. At the beginning of October 2005 itself, immediately after the publication of these offensive cartoons, Government of India had conveyed its strong sense of outrage to the Danish Government, both through its Ambassador in New Delhi and through our Ambassador in Copenhagen. While expressing India`s distress over such lack of sensitivity to the religious sentiments of people, the Indian side urged that the newspaper should express its apologies and the Danish Government should ensure that such actions did not recur.

e) The Danish government has not taken any specific action against the newspaper which published these offensive cartoons. However, the Danish paper issued a press statement on 30 January 2006 apologizing to the Muslim world. The Prime Minister of Denmark issued a statement on 31 January 2006 emphasizing that the Danish Government condemns any expression, action, or indication that attempts to demonize groups of people on the basis of their religion or ethnic background.