

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:937

ANSWERED ON:25.11.2009

MISBEHAVIOUR WITH INDIAN PRIESTS IN NEPAL

Namdhari Shri Inder Singh;Ramasubbu Shri S.;Vinay Kumar Alias Vinnu Shri

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Indian priests were attacked at Pashuptinath Temple, Kathmandu, Nepal;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has taken up the matter with the Government of Nepal;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government of Nepal thereto; and
- (e) the effective steps taken by the Government to ensure safety of Indians in foreign countries including Nepal?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (DR. SHASHI THAROOR)

- (a) Yes.
- (b) The two newly appointed Indian priests at Pashupati Nath temple were attacked on 04/09/2009 when they were doing shuddikaran anushtan behind closed doors for joining puja duties from 05/09/2009, as required by temple customs.
- (c) Yes.
- (d) The matter was immediately taken up at the highest levels in the Government of Nepal and our Government's deep anguish and serious concern was conveyed over the attack. A team from the Embassy of India, Kathmandu, visited the Pashupatinath Temple to reassure the Indian priests. The Cultural Affairs Minister of Nepal along with our Ambassador in Kathmandu visited the temple and met the priests. The Minister apologised on behalf of the Government of Nepal and condemned the criminal act. Following this criminal assault, local authorities have deployed a new security contingent around the temple. The Nepalese authorities also apprehended persons involved in this incident. The Nepalese authorities at the highest levels have assured additional steps to ensure the safety and security of Indian priests in Nepal. Since then there has been no untoward incident.
- (e) The safety, security and welfare of Indian citizens abroad are an abiding and central concern of the Government of India.