

non-tribal families) in Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary at a cost of Rs. 85.00 crores. The Ministry has requested Government of Kerala to modify/recast the proposal in tune with the revised guidelines of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme— 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats' for further consideration of the proposal subject to the availability of funds and fulfillment of necessary procedural requirements. The response from the State Government is awaited.

SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Sir, in the answer, the Minister actually cited the position now. This is related to one rehabilitation proposal from Government of Kerala. The Minister actually cited two reasons there. One is to recast the proposal in tune with the CSS. Further, yet another rider is there; that is, the availability of funds. I would like to know from the Minister, through you, for this kind of a very sensitive area, how much funds we actually have allocated and what is the status of disbursement to various States on various schemes of this type.

SHRI S. REGUPATHY: Sir, each family will get Rs.10 lakhs under the scheme. This is related to the Wayanad wildlife sanctuary. For various States, they are issuing compensation through Project Tiger, for which I will send the statement to the hon. Member because it contains 37 reserves.

SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Now, Sir, there is a problem. After the implementation of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Forest Dwellers Recognition of Forest Rights Act, I would like to know whether the Government is seriously considering or has made any status report of the potentiality of the number of involved number of people to be rehabilitated. I would also like to know whether the Planning Commission has any idea regarding this. This is what I would like to know from the hon. Minister.

SHRI S. REGUPATHY: Sir, this question is related to the Wayanad wildlife sanctuary. I have the particulars sought. The total tribal population in the 61 enclosures is 7,207, and that of the non-tribals is 4,333. Regarding the first phase, the Government of Kerala has sent the proposal for which we have requested the Government of Kerala to re-propose it under the new scheme. Earlier, the compensation was Rs. 1 lakh and now it is increased to Rs. 10 lakhs.

Protection of migrant labourers

*147. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that thousands of migrant labourers in middle east countries are not getting their wages and legal dues and many of them are still inside jail on false fabricated cases; and

(b) if so, the action taken by Government of India till today to protect the migrant labourers in middle east countries?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI) : (a) and (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Missions are in receipt of complaints from time to time in respect of non-payment or reduced and delayed payments of salaries, non-deployment on promised jobs, adverse working conditions etc. Missions take up such matters immediately with the concerned employer and local authorities for redressal.

There are cases of emigrants landing up in jails; though they go abroad legally and take employments. This happens because, on arrival of the emigrants some foreign employers take custody of their passports but do not renew visas in time, thereby making their stay illegal. Further, lured by unscrupulous agents or employers, many people go on visit visas and take up employment, which becomes illegal and when detected are jailed. People are in jails for violating local laws. However, many foreign Governments declare Amnesty Schemes from time to time giving scope to emigrants whose stay has become illegal to either regularize their stay or get deported without penalty. This Ministry coordinates the same with the Missions, Home Ministry, Civil Aviation Ministry and State Governments to facilitate smooth regularization or deportation.

With a view to protect the interests of the Indian workers going abroad, the following steps have been taken:—

- Attestation of employment documents by the Indian missions concerned in respect of six countries *viz.* Yemen, Lebanon, Libya, Jordan, Sudan and Kuwait for all categories of workers (skilled and unskilled) has been made mandatory whereas for vulnerable categories, *i.e.* housemaids/domestic servants and unskilled labour, attestation of employment documents by the Indian missions has been made mandatory for all ECR countries.
- All demands for 500 or more workers is verified for the genuineness of the demand as well as the Foreign Employer by the concerned Indian mission.
- All demands from Recruiting Agents in the Watch List of the Ministry are attested by the Indian mission concerned before grant of clearance.
- Protectors of Emigrants have been asked to conduct appropriate checks and exercise abundant caution while granting emigration clearance, while taking into account the extant instructions of the Ministry.
- The Ministry has been negotiating bilateral labour MOUs with important destination countries to secure their cooperation in ensuring protection and welfare of Indian workers. MOUs have been signed with Malaysia, Kuwait, UAE and Oman. An Additional Protocol has been signed with Qatar to supplement the existing bilateral labour agreement. MOU has been negotiated with Bahrain. Negotiations with other major destination countries are being attempted.
- Special measures being taken for better protection and welfare of vulnerable sections of emigrants including women emigrants are:—
 1. Age restriction of 30 years for all women emigrating on ECR passports.

2. Gradual opening of Overseas Indian Workers Resource Centre in host countries to serve as a one stop service outlet for addressing the information and assistance needs of emigrants.
 3. A 24x7 helpline *viz.* Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) has been set up to enable emigrants/prospective emigrants to seek information and file complaints against Recruiting Agents/Foreign Employers.
- A comprehensive insurance scheme, *viz.* Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana, 2006, is in place, which makes it mandatory for every emigrant worker to be covered under the Scheme while seeking emigration clearance. The Scheme, *inter-alia*, provides workers with life insurance, medical expenses and legal expenses cover and also the deportation expenses wherever needed. With effect from 01.04.2008, the scheme has been upgraded by providing additional benefits at reduced premium rates. Workers now have life insurance coverage of Rs. 10 lakhs (in place of Rs. 5 lakhs), Medical Expenses coverage of Rs. 75,000/- (in place of Rs. 50,000/-) Family Hospitalization coverage of Rs. 50,000/- (in place of Rs. 25,000/-), Maternity Expenses coverage of Rs. 25,000/- (in place of Rs. 20,000/-), Legal Expenses coverage of Rs. 30,000/- (in place of Rs. 25,000/-) etc. The insurance premium has been reduced to Rs. 275 for 2 years policy period and Rs. 375 for 3 years policy period.
 - A vigorous campaign in the print and electronic media to educate potential emigrants including labourers and other vulnerable sections like women emigrants has been launched to propagate the benefits and hazards of legal and illegal migration respectively.
 - Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs co-ordinates redressal of such grievances. Indian Missions immediately take up the matter with local Government and foreign employer to sort out the problem. In case of need the help of the Indian community organizations is also arranged by the Mission. Missions also hold open house meeting from time to time so as to afford a chance to the emigrants to bring their grievances to the notice of the Missions.

SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Sir, I would like to know whether any migrant labour, engineer or doctor is arrested in other countries; whether there is any information given to the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs; if so, whether the Government has the information on the number of such migrant labourers are inside jail and the number of them in the Middle East countries including Dubai; what steps the Government of India is taking to release them from the jails? In view of the meltdown and recession in economy, many migrant workers, doctors and engineers, are coming back to India. I would like to know whether it will have direct impact on our foreign reserve and the action plan to rehabilitate them in their respective States, specially in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Sir, the hon. Member's question has two parts. In the first part, the hon. Member wanted to know whether the Indiaborn workers are in jails. Sir, the exact number is not coming to us. Whenever we receive a complaint, we seek the report from our Embassy and we will intervene and legal assistance is provided. I cannot provide the exact number because it varies from country to country and the Gulf. Definitely, I can assure the hon. Member that the Ministry is very much vigilant on this matter. We monitor whenever we get a complaint and we try to do everything possible. Every year all the gulf countries declare amnesty. With amnesty being declared we see that all the people who are illegally staying there or in jail are sent back to India. The second question is about the people who are coming back due to the meltdown and economic crisis. Sir, we could not get the exact number but vaguely it has come to me in the last month that about 16,000 people have come. It is not accurate. But 16,000 to 20,000 people have come. This is from one report. We are seeking reports from all the missions. They have to send us the exact report. We are also checking with the airlines to know how many people are coming. Every year about two lakh people return. That is the regular practice. If it is above two lakhs, we are calculating how many are coming back. Sir, we are yet to get the complete report. It is only two months. We are trying to get the full report.

SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Sir,...

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have already put two questions.

SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Sir, just one more question. Sir, many Indian workers are working outside. I just want to know from the hon. Minister whether India will initiate a proposal in ILO — which is a tripartite body — to develop some convention in ILO to deal with the situation of the migrant labour around various States because with some countries we have bilateral agreement but we do not have bilateral agreement with other countries. I would like to know from the Minister whether Government of India — being a sending country — would move to ILO to have a special convention of migrant labour to deal with the situation in other countries.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Sir, there was an initiative from the international organisation for migration in collaboration with the Gulf countries, the Abu Dhabi dialogue. The Abu Dhabi dialogue was mainly based on one of the ILO conventions, which is how to deal with these migration workers. Thereafter, Sir, another meeting was held in Geneva on the subject. Definitely, Sir, the Government of India is entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with all the Gulf countries already signed for and we have renewed the protocol with Qatar. Bahrain is waiting for my visit. Everything is complete. They are waiting for my visit to sign the agreement. Malaysia has also to sign. Many initiatives have been taken to protect Indian workers and all the Indian missions. I compliment the Indian Mission. They are very vigilant. An initiative has come. Whenever we report the matter, an initiative is taken by the Indian Mission and we activate. The Indian Mission who is working is praiseworthy. I am very glad about that.

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Sir, the migrant workers are playing a very important role for the Indian economy as well. They are the highest receipt of remittances from abroad. They have a very big contribution and they should be dealt with more sensitively. I think, we should address the problem at the root. When the migrant workers go, one section is legal migrants and a big section is illegally going and this illegality of migration outside is arising out of a number of fake agencies who are operating in our country by which they are being trapped. Hon. Minister is quite aware of it. I would like to know whether Government is planning to have a proper system by which migration can be handled more effectively by legal framework and the fake agencies are completely nabbed. I think, this is crucially important. It is mainly because of their illegality that they are giving trouble outside and they are being blackmailed by the employers also.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Sir, to an extent the hon. Member's question is already under the attention of the Government because there are certain facts which the hon. Member has said. That is why, Sir, we have taken an initiative to check the unscrupulous agents as well as the illegal agents. Immediate action will be taken if any complaints are received at my office. The first step is to suspend the licence and, then, only we ask for an explanation. Only then, we ask for their explanation. If explanatory is not satisfactory, we cancel their licence. So, we have been taking strict action. We will continue to do that.

Moreover, Sir, the Immigration Act was 25 years old. It was enacted in 1983. It needs to be amended taking into account the latest developments in the world as well as other things. What the hon. Member has said is correct that there are unscrupulous agents, some agents are charging exorbitant rates and a lot many issues are involved. That is why the Government has already approved amendments to the Immigration Act, 1983. With your permission, I hope, I can introduce it in the House.

श्री राजनीति प्रसाद: सर, जो गरीब लोग यहां से विदेशों में काम करने के लिए जाते हैं तो उनको एजेंट यहां से ले जाते हैं। जो मजदूर लोग या कोई अन्य लोग यहां से विदेशों में काम करने के लिए जाते हैं, जो उनके एम्प्लॉयर्स हैं, जो उनको नौकरी देते हैं, वे उनके पासपोर्ट अपने पास रख लेते हैं, जबकि नियमानुसार पासपोर्ट संबंधित व्यक्ति के पास रहना चाहिए। अभी मंत्री जी ने जवाब दिया है कि पासपोर्ट वे रख लेते हैं, जब एम्पलायर उनके पासपोर्ट अपने पास रख लेते हैं, तो संबंधित व्यक्ति को मालूम नहीं होता है कि वीजा हो गया है या नहीं और उसे वीजा की डेट एक्सपायर होने के बारे में भी सही पता नहीं होता है, ऐसे एम्पलायर या ऐसे लोगों के खिलाफ में आप क्या एक्शन लेते हैं?

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Sir, it is true. Earlier, the employer used to take the Passport into his custody. Thereafter, MoUs with different countries were signed and we have taken up this matter with the concerned Governments of the Gulf countries. Now, it has come down. Some Governments like UAE and others have issued orders saying that the employer need not keep the Indian document — Passport — with them. So, the incidents of employers seizing or keeping Passport have come down by almost 50 per cent. We are pursuing this matter to see that the Passport will be in the safe custody. We are thinking where to keep the Passport — whether with the employee or with the Embassy. But, it is yet to be decided. But, the safety of Passport is the most important thing.

Sir, the hon. Member's second part of the question is correct. There are many employees who go on a proper Visa. But, certain employers take the Passport into their custody. They never renew it in time and make the employee become illegal. This has been done with an idea to get more work from the employee or exploit him. So, in such a situation, we are very vigilant. We are making the Embassy to intervene. We have been pursuing such matters. We are making our best to see that no employee is harassed and become illegal through illegal actions of the employer.

श्री अवतार सिंह करीमपुरी: सर, ऑनरेबल मिनिस्टर साहब ने कहा है कि 'On how many migrant labourers in jails abroad, I have no perfect information.' मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि वे आने वाले समय में क्या कोई ऐसा प्रावधान करेंगे कि कम से कम परफेक्ट इंफोर्मेशन सरकार के पास आए जो हमारे लेबर्स हैं और जिनको नाजायज तरीके से जेलों में रखा गया है, उनके लिए रूटीन में सरकार कार्यवाही करे।

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: We are collecting the information on the basis of the question from different Ministries. As soon as I receive the information, I will place it on the Table of the House.

श्री बनवारी लाल कंचल: सर, एक सेकंड।...(व्यवधान)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. No interventions.....(Interruptions).....I am sorry.

आप इंटरवीन नहीं करेंगे। आपको इसका जवाब नहीं मिलेगा।

किसानों को ऋण की वसूली में छूट प्रदान किया जाना

***148. श्री शिवानन्द तिवारी:††**

डॉ. मुरली मनोहर जोशी:

क्या वित्त मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि देश में उन किसानों पर 32,000 करोड़ रुपए का ऋण बकाया है जिनके पास पांच एकड़ और इससे अधिक कृषि भूमि है;

(ख) यदि नहीं, तो तत्संबंधी तथ्य क्या हैं;

(ग) क्या इस ऋण की वसूली में सरकार द्वारा कतिपय छूट दिए जाने की कोई योजना विचाराधीन है; और

(घ) यदि हां, तो इस योजना की रूपरेखा क्या है और इस योजना से देश में कितने किसानों को लाभ मिलेगा?

वित्त मंत्री (श्री प्रणव मुखर्जी): (क) से (घ) एक विवरण राज्य सभा के पटल पर रख दिया गया है।

विवरण

(क) एवं (ख) नाबार्ड द्वारा दी गई सूचना के अनुसार, 31 मार्च, 2007 को 5 एकड़ या उससे अधिक जोत वाले किसानों के खातों में 2,93,070 करोड़ रु के बकाए में से 43,446 करोड़ रु. अतिदेय था।

(ग) एवं (घ) कृषि ऋण माफी और ऋण राहत (एडीडब्ल्यूडीआर) योजना, 2008 में 5 एकड़ या उससे अधिक जोत वाले सभी किसानों के लिए एकबारगी निपटान (ओटीएस) का प्रावधान है, जिसके अंतर्गत 30 जून, 2009 तक तीन किस्तों में 75 प्रतिशत बकाया का भुगतान करने पर शेष 25 प्रतिशत की छूट दी गयी है। जनवरी,

†† सभा में यह प्रश्न श्री शिवानन्द तिवारी द्वारा पूछा गया।