

safeguarded by the legal system in their respective countries of residence. Whenever necessary, the Government of India intervenes to look after the interests of its citizens through the Indian Diplomatic Missions and Posts abroad.

NRI welfare fund scheme

4531. SHRI K.N. BALAGOPAL: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has introduced NRI welfare fund scheme;
- (b) if so, the major schemes and benefits available to NRIs;
- (c) the number of NRIs who joined the scheme; and
- (d) the amount of money distributed till date as benefits?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) to (d) The Ministry has set up the 'Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF)' in the Indian Missions in 42 countries which have more than 50,000 Overseas Indian populations, to provide on-site welfare for the Overseas Indian Citizens who are in distress in those countries. The Fund is aimed at providing the following services on a means tested basis:—

- (i) Boarding and lodging for distressed overseas Indian workers in Household/domestic sectors and unskilled labourers;
- (ii) Extending emergency medical care to the overseas Indians in need;
- (iii) Providing air passage to stranded overseas Indians in need;
- (iv) Providing initial legal assistance to the overseas Indians in deserving cases.
- (v) Expenditure on incidentals and for airlifting the mortal remains to India or local cremation/burial of the deceased overseas Indian in such cases where a sponsor is unable or unwilling to do so as per the contract and the family is unable to meet the cost.

The Fund is administered by the respective Heads of Missions and financial assistance given by the Missions, in the most deserving cases. The ICWF is funded through budgetary support from the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, funds raised by the Indian Missions by levying a service charge on Consular services and through Voluntary contributions from the Indian community. The Ministry had released an amount of Rs. 71.75 lakhs to the Indian Missions during 2009-10.

Cheating of Indian girls by bridegrooms

4532. SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware of the fact that the NRI bridegrooms used to cheat the Indian girls to whom they marry and did not take them to their respective countries;

(b) the steps Government proposes to take for the solution of this problem; and

(c) whether Government is planning or could plan to make it compulsory to produce unmarried certificate issued by Government where NRI resides, at the time of registration of the marriages in India?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) and (b) Some cases involving such cheating by NRI bridegrooms has come to notice of this Ministry. The approach of the Ministry in addressing these issues has been to create awareness amongst prospective brides and their families on the precautions to be taken before entering into marriages. Accordingly, MOIA has issued guidelines and launched an awareness cum publicity campaign. The Ministry has published a guidance booklet on Marriages to Overseas Indians, distributed multi-lingual pamphlets, conducted seminars, telecast scrolls on TV, audio — visual spots on TV etc. In addition the Ministry extends financial assistance to women in distress through credible NGOs in certain countries. This assistance of US \$ 1,500 is provided to enable the empanelled NGOs for taking steps to assist the woman in documentation and preparatory work for filing the case abroad.

(c) No, Sir.

Reference regarding corruption in US report

4533. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA:

SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Ambassador in USA has informed Government that several references regarding illegal payments to the officials in India have been made in the US report on the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) and Anti-Corruption Enforcement for the second half of 2008 and early part of 2009;

(b) whether in September, 2009, the CVC has asked the CBI to look into each of these instances of corruption and furnish a report; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) From the said US report, it infers that the officials belong to the Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Defence, Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Department of Revenue and Government of Maharashtra. In view of the report of improper payment to a key official in Directorate of Plant Protection, Quarantine and Storage, Faridabad by DE - Nocil, a subsidiary of Dow Chemicals, an inquiry was ordered by the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation into the matter and a case was registered by CBI in 2007. The Ministry of Defence have constituted a Board of Officers for investigating the allegations pertaining to Indian Navy. The Ministry of