

programme. Subsequently on 2 July, 2013, the grace period was further extended till 3 November, 2013. While the number of Indians likely to be affected can be assessed only after the processes of deportation of illegal expatriates and the application of the "Nitaqat" program, currently ongoing, are concluded, the Government is carefully monitoring the evolving situation and taking all possible steps to assist Indian nationals thus affected. These steps include, *inter alia*, extensive community outreach programme, issuance of emergency certificates on gratis basis, facilitation of new job opportunities, liaisons with local authorities and assistance in repatriation, as required.

The Government is in regular discussion with Saudi authorities to ensure welfare of the Indian community in Saudi Arabia.

#### **Problems of emigrants to Gulf countries**

\*79. DR. PRADEEP KUMAR BALMUCHU: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the problems being faced by emigrants to Gulf countries, and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether the number of such emigrants is increasing day-by-day, and if so, the list of persons emigrated to Gulf and other countries during the last three years; and

(c) whether Government has made any arrangements and facilities to protect such persons in case of problems, and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI):

(a) Complaints from Indian workers are received generally pertaining to non-payment/delayed payment or underpayment of salaries, long working hours, inadequate living conditions, physical harassment, non-renewal of visa and labour card on time, refusal to pay for the medical treatment, denial of leave and air-ticket to the hometown on completion of contract period, refusal of leave or 'exit/re-entry permits'/final exit visa' etc.

(b) The number of Indian emigrants has marginally increased in some of the Gulf countries. The details regarding emigration clearances granted for Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries during the last three years is given in the Statement (*See below*).

(c) Whenever a complaint is received from any Indian worker abroad, action is initiated by the Ministry by asking the concerned Indian Mission to look into the matter. If the complaint is received by the Indian Mission, the Indian Mission also initiates action to resolve the issue by getting in touch with the foreign employer/local authorities and emigrant worker concerned. If a registered Recruiting Agent is involved, action against the registered Recruiting Agent is taken as per Emigration Act, 1983. If the complaint is against an unregistered agent, the matter is referred to concerned State Governments for investigation and action as per Emigration Act 1983, and other provisions of the law, as appropriate.

The Government has taken several initiatives to protect the welfare of overseas Indian workers which, *inter-alia*, include:

- (i) A 24x7 toll-free helpline *viz.* Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) has been set up in Delhi to enable emigrants/ prospective emigrants to seek information and file complaints against Recruiting Agents/Foreign Employers.
- (ii) Migration Resource Centres (MRCs) at Cochin, Hyderabad and Panchkula (Haryana).
- (iii) A Nation-wide Awareness-cum-Publicity Campaign through Media to educate potential emigrants including benefits or hazards of legal and illegal migration respectively.
- (iv) Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) has been established in all the Indian Missions for on-site welfare of emigrants. Around 28,000 emigrants have benefitted from the Scheme during the last three years and Rs. 37 crores has been utilized for the purpose.
- (v) For redressal of grievances at Dubai at the Indian Workers Resource Centre (IWRC) there is a 24x7 toll free multilingual helpline. Other Missions also have helpline/help desk to attend to grievances of Indian nationals.
- (vi) Computerized emigration clearance system exists in all POE offices. Security stickers are now pasted on the passport, giving information about the RAs, name of foreign employer, occupation, wages, insurance policy number, passport/visa number and the helpline number.

- (vii) Memorandum of Understanding on employment of workers (MoU): India has signed Labour agreements with Jordan and Qatar in 1980s. The Ministry, after its creation in 2004, made concerted efforts to enter into bilateral Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with the major receiving Countries for ensuring protection and welfare of our emigrants. MoU were signed with United Arab of Emirates (UAE) in December, 2006, with Kuwait in April, 2007, with Oman in November, 2008, with Malaysia in January, 2009, and with Bahrain in June, 2009. An Additional Protocol to the existing Labour Agreement between India and Qatar was signed in November, 2007.
- (viii) In addition, the Government has taken the following measures for protecting the safety and welfare of women workers of the ECR (Emigration Check Required) category to emigrate to 17 notified countries:
- (i) Age restriction of 30 years for women emigrating on ECR passports to ECR countries.
  - (ii) Minimum referral wage for emigrants fixed by Mission.
  - (iii) Security deposit of US\$ 2500 to be paid by foreign employer.
  - (iv) Compulsory pre-attestation of employment documents by the Indian Mission concerned for all women emigrants.
  - (v) Pre-paid mobile phone facility for Housemaids to be provided by foreign employer.
  - (vi) Operating shelters for distressed emigrants by Indian Missions.

*Statement*

| Sl. No. | Country     | 2010  | 2011  | 2012  | 2013 upto June |
|---------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|----------------|
| 1       | 2           | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6              |
| 1.      | Afghanistan | 256   | 487   | 125   | 98             |
| 2.      | Bahrain     | 15101 | 14323 | 20150 | 10171          |
| 3       | Indonesia   | 3     | 22    | 11    | 30             |

| 1     | 2         | 3      | 4      | 5      | 6      |
|-------|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 4     | Iraq      | 390    | 1177   | 917    | 2546   |
| 5     | Jordan    | 2562   | 1413   | 1819   | 804    |
| 6.    | Kuwait    | 37667  | 45149  | 55868  | 36006  |
| 7.    | Lebanon   | 765    | 534    | 288    | 121    |
| 8.    | Libya     | 5221   | 477    | 01     | 18     |
| 9     | Malaysia  | 20577  | 17947  | 21241  | 10692  |
| 10    | Oman      | 105807 | 73819  | 84384  | 35634  |
| 11    | Qatar     | 45752  | 41710  | 63096  | 38331  |
| 12    | S. Arabia | 275172 | 289297 | 357503 | 191693 |
| 13    | Sudan     | 957    | 1175   | 491    | 43     |
| 14.   | Syria     | 2      | 118    | 0      | 5      |
| 15    | Thailand  | 05     | 27     | 09     | 3      |
| 16    | U. A. E.  | 130910 | 138861 | 141138 | 91200  |
| 17    | Yemen     | 208    | 29     | 0      | 2      |
| TOTAL |           | 641355 | 626565 | 747041 | 417397 |

Source: Emigration Services Division, MOIA.

### **Obstacles in land acquisition for expansion of NHS**

\*80. SHRI N.K. SINGH: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether land acquisition has been remaining a severe obstacle for the expansion of National Highways across the country;

(b) if so, the facts thereof and the steps taken by Government to remove such obstacles and to achieve the target of expansion of National Highways within the stipulated period of time; and