

(b) what action Government has taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ):

(a) and (b) The Consulate General of India in Mazar-e-Sharif in Balkh Province, Northern Afghanistan was attacked by terrorists on January 3-4, 2016. During their operations, Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) killed four terrorists involved in the attack. Mr. Mohammad Salim of ANDSF died in the attack while ten personnel of ANDSF and one civilian were injured. All Indian diplomats and staff deployed at the Consulate General were unharmed in the attack due to the efforts of the Consulate's India-based security team and the Afghan security forces.

Government awaits detailed information from Afghan authorities regarding the result of their investigation into the attack.

Government of India has been upgrading, on a regular basis, all security arrangements at our Embassy and four Consulates in Afghanistan. These measures are undertaken in close consultations with, and with the assistance of, Afghan security agencies. In the light of the recent terrorist attack, Government has undertaken further review of security measures in Afghanistan in coordination with Afghan authorities, and is taking all necessary steps to ensure safety and security of the Consulate and its personnel.

Bringing back of stranded Indians from abroad

†*25. SHRIMATI KANAK LATA SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications registered at Ministry's website *www.madad.gov.in* for help and how many of them have been brought back to country from abroad or provided help;

(b) whether the Ministry is aware that hundreds of workers from Poorvanchal, Uttar Pradesh are trapped in Saudi Arabia and they are willing to come back but are facing delay in getting assistance; and

(c) whether it is a fact that several eminent persons have written letter in this regard but no satisfactory action has been taken so far, if so, the facts thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ):

(a) As of 20 February, 2016, a total of 6473 grievances have been registered on the Madad Portal, out of which 1754 grievances relate to repatriation of Indian nationals

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

from foreign countries. Out of these 1754 grievances, 1075 have been resolved. On the remaining 679 grievances, action is being taken by our Embassies/Consulates concerned.

(b) and (c) As of 20 February, 2016, data available on the Madad portal in respect of Saudi Arabia indicates that, 855 grievances relate to repatriation of Indian nationals. Out of these, 451 cases have already been resolved. For the remaining 404 cases, our Embassy in Riyadh and our Consulate General in Jeddah are taking follow-up action. These grievances filed on the MADAD Portal relate to workers from various parts of India, including from Poorvanchal in Uttar Pradesh. State-wise data on these grievances, however, is not available. Given the Kafala (Sponsorship) system adopted by Saudi Arabia, our Embassy and Consulate General in Saudi Arabia intervene with the Saudi Government and the Saudi employer/sponsor to resolve outstanding disputes and help repatriate Indian workers on humanitarian grounds. Where necessary, our Embassy and Consulate General use funds from the Indian Community Welfare Fund to pay any outstanding fines and also for temporary lodging and airfare of workers who are to be repatriated.

179 Indian workers in Mohammad-Al-Mojil Group (MMG) company had requested repatriation to India, since they had not been paid salaries for several months as a result of a serious financial crisis in the company in 2014. Due to the active efforts of our Embassy in Riyadh, we were able to repatriate 72 of these workers to India in October-November, 2015, with airfares paid for by the Embassy. In subsequent months, 56 more workers have returned to India. Our Embassy continues to take up the matter with the Saudi authorities and also the management of the company for early repatriation of the remaining 51 workers. The introduction of the MADAD Portal has also brought about a qualitative improvement in our procedures for handling of consular grievances, through online forwarding, tracking and escalation, until they are eventually resolved. I would like to inform you that I take personal interest in ensuring that any letter received from eminent persons on any consular matter gets due attention in the Ministry of External Affairs and is responded to at the earliest. My office closely follows up urgent cases directly with our Ambassador concerned.

Taking rice fortification model to other parts of the country

26. SHRI SANJIV KUMAR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the rice fortification model adopted in Gajapati district of Odisha has been very beneficial from the viewpoint of nutrition;