

- (ii) On March 2, Harnish Patel, a US National of Indian origin, was shot dead by unknown individuals in Lancaster, South Carolina. Investigations are underway to identify the culprits and to ascertain if this was a racially motivated crime.
- (iii) On March 4, Deep Rai, a US National of Indian origin, was shot by an unknown person in Kent, near Seattle in Washington State. Shri Deep Rai has received treatment and has been discharged from the hospital. The culprit is yet to be arrested and the investigating agencies are yet to establish that it is a 'hate crime'.

The Government has taken up this issue with the US Government at very high-levels and conveyed our deep concerns. We have called for necessary measures to ensure the safety and security of Indian Diaspora and expeditious investigation into these incidents. The US Authorities have responded strongly and assured us that they are working with all concerned agencies to ensure speedy justice. There has been widespread condemnation of these incidents by the US leadership, both in the Administration and the Congress.

The Government has also reached out to affected persons and their families for extending all possible help and support. Close contacts with the local Indian Community Groups are being maintained through our Mission and Consulates in the US for addressing any emergent issues.

(d) and (e) The issue was discussed in detail with the Congressional leadership by Foreign Secretary during his visit to the US from February 28 to March 3, 2017. After his meeting with Foreign Secretary, Speaker of the House of Representatives Paul Ryan issued a statement expressing the House's condolences on the Kansas incident. The House also observed a moment of silence. Several Senators and Congressmen have also expressed their condolences and regret over these incidents.

Passports for children with single mother

1606. SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken note of the fact that despite the provisions that only one parent's name is mandatory while submitting the application for issue of passport, it is extremely difficult for children with single mother to get a passport; and

(b) if so, the details of the steps being taken by Government to simplify the process for such children?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GENERAL (RETD.) V. K. SINGH]: (a) The Government has not come across any recent case of difficulty being faced by children with single parent to get a passport after simplification of passports rules notified on 26.12.2016.

(b) By this notification, the Government simplified the procedure for issue of passports to the children/applicants with single parent by permitting them to mention the name of only one parent in the family details of the applicant. Further, if the consent of the other parent is not available (in respect of minor children), the single parent applying for a passport for a minor child may obtain the same by submitting a declaration in this regard on a plain paper in Annexure-C to the Passports Rules, 2016.

Facilitation of repatriation of Indian workers

1607. SHRI A. K. SELVARAJ: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has facilitated repatriation of nearly 90,000 Indians working in 54 countries and assisted 80,000 Indians who were caught in dangerous situations during the last two years;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the ecosystem of administrative organisation has been strengthened to address issues such as loss of passport and need for legal advice, medical emergency, shelter and transportation;

(c) whether Indian Embassies have been directed to be proactive to address such problems quickly; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GENERAL (RETD.) V. K. SINGH]: (a) Yes. 95,665 Indian Nationals were assisted, evacuated and brought back to India during the last two years from countries affected by war, internal strife and natural disasters.

(b) Yes. The Government has been according highest priority to the safety and security of overseas Indians. All matters on this aspect are being monitored at the level of the External Affairs Minister. Government has been encouraging our workers to go abroad after acquiring basic information about the place and also the necessary skills for the job. In this context, Government has also launched an awareness campaign 'सुरक्षित जाओ प्रशिक्षित जाओ' 'Go safe, go trained'. All the Indian Embassies and Consulates abroad have a Twitter handle to institutionalize their engagement on social media and ensure that help reaches to all those who need it.