

(b) if so, whether Government would consider taking up their problems with USA Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI M. J. AKBAR): (a) and (b) There are no specific inputs to suggest that any large group of Indian students staying legally in the U.S. are currently facing the risk of deportation.

Government of India remains engaged with the United States Administration and the Congress in regard to all issues relating to the Indian students including their training and employment.

Religious persecutions

2432. SHRI RIPUN BORA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has any report on any religious persecutions taking place in Afghanistan and Pakistan after 1947 and in Bangladesh after 1971 for which the people of different religions had to come to India for shelter;

(b) if so, the details of religious persecutions taken place in those countries;

(c) the number of people who have come to India due to this, country-wise and religion-wise; and

(d) the number of total Hindu Bengali families who are taking shelter in Assam due to such persecutions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI M. J. AKBAR): (a) to (d) Government carefully monitors political and social developments in India's neighbourhood. It has taken up developments of concern as appropriate with neighbouring Governments, including those of Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Various religious minorities in Pakistan have over the years faced several difficulties in practising their faiths. The Government has emphasized the need to ensure the well being of religious minorities to obviate pressure resulting in their movement to other countries, including India. There are not authoritative statistics in this matter.

Identification of post offices for passport services

2433. SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of post offices that have been identified for passport services in the country;

(b) whether Government has undertaken any study to determine whether such added responsibilities would hinder the efficiency of employees of post offices and if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government proposes to deploy additional personnel to the post offices for carrying duties pertaining to passport services?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GENERAL (RETD.) V. K. SINGH]: (a) The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Department of Posts (DoP) have decided to utilize the Head Post Offices (HPO) in the various States as Post Office Passport Seva Kendra (POPSK) for delivering passport related services to the citizens of the country. The pilot projects for this joint venture between MEA and DOP was inaugurated on 25 January, 2017 at the Post Offices at Mysuru in Karnataka and at Dahod in Gujarat. The POPSK at these two places have been running successfully since their inauguration. With the successful operationalization of these two pilot projects, the Government has now decided to scale up this programme by opening 83 additional POPSKs, taking the total number of POPSK to 85. The list is given in Statement. [Refer to the Statement appended to answer to USQ NO. 2416.] Out of the 85 POPSK, sixteen POPSKs at Asansol, Bikaner, Dahod, Jamshedpur, Kavaratti, Kota, Muzaffarpur, Mysuru, Pathanamthitta, Purnia, Raiganj, Rourkela, Salem, Sambalpur, Udhampur and Vidisha have been inaugurated till 20 March, 2017.

(b) No.

(c) Deployment of staff in Post Offices is an on-going process and is based on the work load of a particular Post Office.

Home for homeless

2434. SHRIMATI RAJANI PATIL: Will the Minister of HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to introduce a scheme of land for landless and home for homeless and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether any proposal from States are pending with Government in this regard and if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of the steps taken by Government on the request of the States for providing home for homeless during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION (RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) No such proposal