

[26 August, 2004]

RAJYA SABHA

- (ii) The Indian Mission in Baghdad has been instructed to visit work sites of Indian citizens to the extent possible to enquire after their safety and well-being and to take appropriate steps. The Indian Embassy in Baghdad has sent its officials to some of the places in Iraq where the Indians are located to enquire their well-being and to provide assistance and guidance in case they decide to leave Iraq.
- (iii) The Indian Mission has been in contact with employers of Indian workers to enquire after their safety and well-being and to allow return to India of the workers desiring to leave Iraq.
- (iv) The Government have requested the Governments of Jordan and Kuwait to issue transit visas to Indians returning from Iraq to India.

Housing scheme for beedi workers in Orissa

2461. SHRI PYARIMOHAN MOHAPATRA: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of beedi workers in the State of Orissa and the number for which funds have been sanctioned under the relevant housing scheme; and

(b) whether it is a fact that the progress under the scheme has been slow in Orissa, and if so, the reasons therefor and the remedial measures proposed to be taken alongwith the time-frame in regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) and (b) There are around 1,85,889 identified beedi workers in the State and 10,715 houses have been sanctioned to the beedi workers out of the Beedi Workers Welfare Fund (BWFF), during the last five years, under the Integrated Housing Scheme. An expenditure of Rs. 13.75 crore (approximately) has actually been incurred by way of disbursement of subsidy during this period. The progress has been quite satisfactory. The financial assistance available to beedi workers for construction of the house has recently been raised from Rs. 20,000/- to Rs. 40,000/- per worker, or 50% of actual cost of construction, whichever is less *w.e.f.* 1st July, 2004.