

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS**Residency related issues of engineers in Kuwait**

*70. SHRI ELAMARAM KAREEM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry is aware of the residency related issues of Indian Engineers in Kuwait due to lack of accreditation of their colleges from the National Board of Accreditation (NBA);

(b) what intervention the Ministry has done in this regard;

(c) whether the Ministry has any statistics of such engineers in Kuwait who fulfill/do not fulfill this criterion;

(d) whether any Indian engineer has lost his job so far due to this issue; and

(e) whether the Ministry has got any assurances from Kuwait officials for safeguarding the interest of Indian engineers and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (DR. SUBRAHMANYAM JAISHANKAR): (a) to (e) Government is aware of certain issues relating to the working of Indian engineers in Kuwait. According to information available with the Indian Mission in Kuwait, out of around 14637 Indian engineers in Kuwait, about 3364 Indian engineers have expressed difficulty concerning their accreditation.

The Ministry, as well as our Mission in Kuwait, have been actively pursuing the matter since March 2018 when Public Authority of Manpower *vide* its notification made mandatory the requirement of obtaining No Objection Certificate (NOC) from Kuwait Society of Engineers for renewal of residencies of expatriate engineers.

The Indian Embassy in Kuwait had immediately raised the matter with the Kuwait authorities, including Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labour, Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), a Government body under Ministry of Labour in Kuwait and Kuwait Society of Engineers (KSE). The matter was discussed during the 6th Joint Working Group (JWG) on Labour and Manpower held in Kuwait on 25-26 April 2018. The Foreign Office Consultations (FoC) between the two countries held in August 2018 in Kuwait also discussed the matter.

At the Embassy's intervention, a delegation from Kuwait's Public Authority for Manpower and Kuwait Society of Engineers had visited Delhi on 25-26 June, 2018. The Kuwaiti delegation had called on the then Minister for Human Resource Development and

had held extensive discussions with the officials from Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD), Department of Higher Education and Heads of the accreditation authorities of India like University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and National Board of Accreditation (NBA). Accordingly, MHRD had compiled a comprehensive list of Technical Institutions in India duly signed by the Chairman of three regulatory authorities *i.e.* NBA, AICTE and UGC and shared with Kuwaiti authorities in July 2018.

Former External Affairs Minister, during her visit to Kuwait on 30-31 October, 2018, took up the issue with Kuwaiti authorities, at the highest level.

A delegation from MHRD visited Kuwait on 04-06 March 2019 for further discussions with PAM, KSE and Dean of University of Kuwait. An action plan was prepared by MHRD which, *inter alia*, envisages sharing of list of National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) approved technical institutes as well as sharing of top 200 National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) technical institutes/universities for last 3 years excluding NBA accredited institutes with concerned Kuwaiti authorities. As per current indications, Kuwaiti authorities are inclined towards considering important non-NBA institutions which are to be recommended by MHRD.

Mission has received no specific information regarding job losses as Kuwaiti authorities have been accommodating non-NBA accreditations also with due adaptation to their policies.

The Kuwaiti authorities have conveyed that the interests of the Indian engineers will be protected / accommodated within the parameters of the policy of the Kuwaiti Government which is to maintain good standards of engineering services available to Kuwait.

Draft New Education Policy

*71. SHRI T. G. VENKATESH: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government proposes to enforce learning Hindi language by including Hindi as a third language in the draft of New Education Policy;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government is aware that this move would go against the sentiments of the people of southern region and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the steps being taken by Government to regard the sentiments of the non-Hindi speaking people?