

Visit of Minister to Bhutan

653. SHRIMATI SHANTA CHHETRI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether he has pledged to work in cooperation on economic development and hydro-power between India and Bhutan; and
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the details of agreements/MoUs exchanged between the two countries during his visit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN): (a) and (b) External Affairs Minister visited Bhutan on 7-8 June, 2019. This was his first visit abroad as the External Affairs Minister and reflects the importance that India attaches to its bilateral relationship with Bhutan, a close friend and neighbour. During the visit, the Minister held discussions with Bhutan's leadership on various aspects of our bilateral partnership including economic development and hydro-power co-operation. Both sides agreed to work together to further strengthen our bilateral co-operation in diverse sectors. No Agreements/MoUs were signed during the visit.

Transportation of mortal remains from abroad

654. SHRI ANIL DESAI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of standing instructions issued regarding repatriation of mortal remains from abroad;
- (b) the number of such cases of repatriation that has taken place during the last three years; and
- (c) whether there is any financial angle involved in such repatriation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN): (a) For the purpose of bringing back the mortal remains of an Indian national from abroad, registration of death at the Indian Mission/Post concerned is necessary, for which normally the following documents are required:

- Medical report/death certificate issued from the hospital.
- Copy of detailed police report (with English translation, if report is in some other language), in case of accidental or unnatural death.

- Consent letter from next of kin of the deceased for local cremation/burial/transportation of mortal remains, duly attested by a notary.
- Copy of passport and visa pages.
- In addition to the above, other documents such as clearance and arrangements for embalming of mortal remains, clearance from local immigration/customs department, etc. are required. These procedures may differ from country to country.

While there is no undue delay in cases of natural deaths, the time taken in transporting the mortal remains to India could be longer in the case of unnatural deaths, because of local procedures involved in those countries for investigating the cause of death.

Our Missions/Posts remain in constant touch with the next of kin of the deceased Indian national to facilitate the transportation or local burial/cremation of the mortal remains in accordance with the wishes of the family of the deceased and local regulations. Our Missions/Posts also liaise with the foreign officials concerned to expedite procedures for the repatriation of mortal remains to India and extend all possible assistance to the family of the deceased.

(b) As per information available with the Ministry, mortal remains of 14,312 Indian nationals from 125 countries have been brought back to India since 2016 till May 31, 2019.

(c) Financial support to families of deceased Indian nationals for airlifting of mortal remains is made available by Indian Missions/Posts abroad in deserving cases on a means tested basis under the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF).

Drop in Indian students seeking admission in United Kingdom

655. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a steep drop in the number of Indian students seeking admission in the Universities of United Kingdom and if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(b) whether the matter has been taken up with Government of United Kingdom on the issue of smoother and greater students and faculty mobility between the two countries and if so, the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN): (a) As per the UK official source - the Higher Education Statistics