

(g) whether some stranded Indian nationals are still awaiting evacuation in Iraq, Kuwait and other Gulf countries; and

(h) if so, their number and the measures being taken to protect the interests of those Indians who are still residing in Gulf countries?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Approximately 1,50,000 Indian nationals were repatriated from Iraq and Kuwait. In view of the conditions prevalent during their repatriation, it is not possible to give state-wise figures.

(b) Estimated expenditure on repatriation of stranded Indians is approximately Rs. 300 crores.

(c) In some cases, people who could afford to do so, paid for their evacuation.

(d) Details are being sought from the concerned missions.

(e) and (f). A decision has been taken to form a National Committee for relief & Rehabilitation of Indian nationals returning from the Gulf region. A Gulf Relief & Rehabilitation Fund is also being constituted.

(g) No Sir.

(h) Government of India is committed to taking the best possible care of the interest of Indian nationals in the Gulf.

Construction of Roads in Forest Areas of Bihar

127. SHRI TEJ NARAYAN SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether problems are being faced in

the construction of roads passing through forest and tribal areas and those being constructed under the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme, due to non-transfer of land by the Forest Department of Bihar; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Union Government to speed up the construction of approved roads?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI RAM BAHADUR SINGH): (a) Government of Bihar have not reported any problem in the construction of roads passing through forest and tribal areas and those constructed under Rural Landless Employment guarantee Programme due to non-transfer of land by Forest Department.

(b) Question does not arise.

New Telephone Exchange in Bihar

128. SHRI TEJ NARAYAN SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government had accorded approval for setting up a new telephone exchange in Bihar with a capacity of five thousand lines during 1989-90;

(b) if so, whether the work has since commenced; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and the time by which it is likely to be set up?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JAI PARKASH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Do not arise in view of (a) above.