

their parents and not being taken by any unauthorised person. Immigration authorities have been specifically instructed to scrutinize the documents of those who take handicapped children in pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia. Consideration is also being given to the issue to separate passport for children in order to serve the same purpose.

(c) Yes Sir. Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the Statement of March 8, 1997. However, Government is not aware of 2000 children, mostly girls, stated to be present in Saudi Arabia. During the year 1997, till date, a total of 226 children, found begging, have been deported from Saudi Arabia in five batches. This was a consequence of Saudi crackdown on begging at Holy places.

#### Statement

*Statement referred to in reply to parts (a) to (g) of Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 21 (Priority I) Regarding "Selling of Children and Girls" Due Answer on February 24, 1997.*

130 Indian children, most of them handicapped were apprehended by the authorities of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia while begging in Jeddah and the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. The Saudi authorities did this as a part of an exercise to apprehend beggars, irrespective of their nationality, during the month of Ramadan. These children were subsequently deported to India by the Saudi authorities with the Consulate General of India, Jeddah issuing the necessary travel documents for their return to India. The deportation was done in two batches i.e. 77 children on January 13, 1997 (consisting of 76 girls and one boy) and 47 boys on February 3, 1997 making it a total of 124. Another 6 children, similarly apprehended, are awaiting deportation from Saudi Arabia.

As per preliminary enquiries by the officials of the Indian Consulate General, Jeddah, most of the children hailed from Murshidabad district of West Bengal. The children had gone to Saudi Arabia on Haj/Umrah visas, arranged by organised gangs, engaged in human trafficking. The Government of West Bengal has been requested to conduct a detailed inquiry into the operation of these gangs.

Government is gravely concerned at such incidents of trafficking in children. While minimising any inconvenience to pilgrims, it is determined to ensure that only bonafide cases of children accompanying parents on pilgrimage should be permitted. A tightening of procedures is being undertaken in order to ensure that children travelling abroad are in fact accompanying their parents and not being taken by any unauthorised persons. Consideration is also being given to the fact issue of separate passports for children in order to serve the same purpose.

#### Machines and Equipments in Patel Chest Institute

79. SHRI RAM BAHADUR SINGH.

SHRI DINESH CHANDRA YADAV:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that costly machines and equipments are lying idle in the Vallabhbai Patel Chest Institute and the hospitals is virtually paralysed with practically no patients;

(b) whether the Government have also received complaints about the non-maintenance of the expenditure accounts and other irregularities being committed in the Institute;

(c) if so, the details thereof, and

(d) the action taken by the Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) There is no such report. The diagnostic and research laboratories as well as the 20-bed inpatient facility attached to the Clinical Research Centre of the Vallabhbai Patel Chest Institute, Delhi are reported to be functioning normally, with daily patient attendance of 250-300 on an average.

(b) to (d) No specific complaints in this regard have been received. The audit of the Institute upto the year 1994-95 has been conducted and action on the final audit report will be taken as and when received. However, with a view to further improving the functioning of the Institute, it has been decided to constitute an Academic Committee and a Finance Committee, for the Institute.

[Translation]

#### Regularisation of Illegal Colonies

80. SHRI LAL BIHARI TIWARI: Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state

(a) whether the Government of Delhi had submitted a proposal to the Ministry about three years ago for regularising 1071 unauthorised colonies in Eastern Delhi, and

(b) if so, the reasons for not regularising these colonies, so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (DR. U. VENKATESWARLU): (a) and (b) Proposals have been received from Government of NCT of Delhi to regularise all unauthorised colonies in Delhi as existed on 31.3.1993. However, the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi in CWP No. 4771/93 has restrained the respondents, including Union of India, from taking any decision or action for regularising any unauthorised colony in Delhi till further orders. Thus the matter is sub-judice.