

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:586

ANSWERED ON:08.05.2013

SAUDI ARABIA'S NEW LABOUR POLICY.

Antony Shri Anto; Bundela Shri Jeetendra Singh

**Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

(a) whether the Government is aware that the new labour policy 'Nitaqat' enforced in Saudi Arabia has adversely affected the job opportunities of Indians working there;

(b) if so, the number of persons who have returned to India so far, as a result thereof, State-wise;

(c) whether the Government has held any talks with Saudi Arabia in this regard or proposes to send a delegation to Saudi Arabia for negotiations and if so, the details thereof;

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to help the affected persons in Saudi Arabia to return to their native places; and

(e) whether the Government has put any plan/scheme in place to rehabilitate those affected by the said Policy, and if so, the details thereof, State-wise? ANSWER MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI) A Statement is laid on the table of the House. Statement as referred to in reply to the Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 586 for 08-05-2013 regarding Saudi Arabia's New Labour Policy.

(a) &

(b): Upto 2nd May over 18,000 applications for issuing Emergency Certificates (EC) to return to India had been received in the Embassy of India. It is reported by the Indian Mission in Riyadh that the recent increase in the number of Indian workers seeking Emergency Certificates (ECs) is not much due to implementation of 'Nitaqat' policy, which has been extended by another three months. It is due to a campaign launched by Saudi authorities against foreign workers, who do not meet the conditions for their stay in Saudi Arabia. This drive affects not only illegal workers from India, but also from all countries from where immigrant workers have come to Saudi Arabia.

(c);

**Answer**

MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI)

A Statement is laid on the table of the House. Statement as referred to in reply to the Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 586 for 08-05-2013 regarding Saudi Arabia's New Labour Policy.

(a) & (b): Upto 2nd May over 18,000 applications for issuing Emergency Certificates (EC) to return to India had been received in the Embassy of India. It is reported by the Indian Mission in Riyadh that the recent increase in the number of Indian workers seeking Emergency Certificates (ECs) is not much due to implementation of 'Nitaqat' policy, which has been extended by another three months. It is due to a campaign launched by Saudi authorities against foreign workers, who do not meet the conditions for their stay in Saudi Arabia. This drive affects not only illegal workers from India, but also from all countries from where immigrant workers have come to Saudi Arabia.

(c); The Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs has led a Ministerial level delegation to Saudi Arabia from 27-29 April, 2013 to exchange views with Saudi authorities on the welfare of the Indian workers and to install confidence in the Indian community there. The delegation urged Saudi authorities to address the issue on humanitarian grounds. The delegation also urged the Indian community in Saudi Arabia to fully utilize the three months' grace period on implementation of 'Nitaqat' announced by Saudi authorities, to obtain alternative employment, and Indian workers, who do not have valid stay permit, to submit their requests for Emergency Certificates (ECs).

(d): On immediate basis, the Embassy of India, Riyadh and Consulate General of India, Jeddah were alerted on the need to attend to the situation, including issue of Emergency Certificates, where required, in time. In this regard, Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has (a) waived off (ICWF) fund, (b) allowed Missions/Posts to bear cost of processing of EC of 40 Saudi Riyals per person, and to provide temporary accommodation, transportation, food etc. to Indian workers in need and (c) to make use of ICWF to meet small penalties/fines in respect of workers who may require such payments for being permitted to return to India.

(e): The Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs had convened a meeting with Ministers handling NRI affairs from the major labour sending States of Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Punjab and West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, on 09-04-2013. In the meeting possibility of workers returning from Saudi Arabia in significant numbers, and its possible impact, including issues of rehabilitation, were discussed. States have been advised to take adequate steps in this regard.