

National Literacy Mission has prepared guidelines for formulation of post literacy projects by districts. PLCs include about 40 hours of guided learning through a volunteer-teacher to enable the learners to reach a self-reliant level of learning. The subsequent phase of the PLC consists of self-directed continuing education through library service, newspapers, group discussions and other activities such as skill development and vocational training. The basic objectives of the post literacy are to help the neoliterates to:

- achieve self-reliance in literacy and numeracy;
- become aware of the cause of their deprivation and move towards amelioration of their condition through organisation and participation in the process of development;
- acquire skills to improve their economic status and general well-being;
- imbibe values of national integration, conservation of environment, women's equality, observance of small family norms etc.; and
- create an environment conducive for literacy efforts and a learning society where literacy would be valued and cherished.

A revised scheme of Continuing Education has also been formulated by NLM for neo-literates coming up in the districts after completion of the two-year PLC. Under this scheme, thrust is given to target-specific functional programmes, namely, equivalency programmes, income-generating programmes, quality of life improvement programmes and individual interest promotion programmes. Apart from this, the programmes related to skill development/upgradation are also envisaged through linkages with various development programmes being implemented in the districts by various Development Departments/Ministries.

Visa Policy

3852. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have formulated any uniform policy regarding issue of visa to neighbouring countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government have taken into consideration the present scenario of continuous threat of terrorist activities from neighbouring countries and their population influx into India;

(d) if so, the details and the steps proposed to be taken in that regard;

(e) the number of nationals of neighbouring countries, who were given visa from June, 1996 to July, 1996;

(f) whether the present visa policy is likely to strengthen relations with neighbouring countries;

(g) whether neighbouring countries have reciprocated in formulating/implementing such policy in the cases of Indians intending to visit these countries; and

(h) if so, the details thereof, country-wise?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Nationals of Nepal and Bhutan are free to travel to India without visa and vice versa. Visa regime applicable with Bangladesh is governed by India-Bangladesh Passport-cum-visa Scheme 1972. With Maldives, an MOU exists which allows 90 days visa free stay to nationals of either country in the other without fee or fine. With Pakistan, however, there is no such reciprocal arrangement.

(c) and (d). Yes, Sir. Government takes serious note of the threat posed by terrorist activities from neighbouring countries and illegal immigration into India. All neighbouring countries except Pakistan are in agreement with India that the territory of one country should not be used in a manner that is prejudicial to the security of the other. Frequent exchanges of views and information are held between the concerned authorities of India and the countries concerned to deal with day-do-day problems and also to devise measures for long-term solutions. The Government also maintains and continuously updates list of persons whose antecedents are to be checked before issue of visa.

(e) The number of nationals of neighbouring countries who were given the visas from June, 1996 to July, 1996 is as under country-wise;

1. Pakistan	7,453
2. Sri Lanka	10,726
3. Bangladesh	35,100
4. Myanmar	125
5. Maldives	197

(f) Government firmly believes that enhanced people-to-people contact promotes understanding between the concerned countries.

(g) and (h). Except for Pakistan, all countries have reciprocated the views and sentiments of the Indian Government and follow reciprocal liberal visa scheme. However, Pakistan regrettably has been following a restrictive

visa regime for Indian nationals which includes pre-verification of visa applications on a case-to-case basis causing long delays and inconvenience to Indian nationals desirous of visiting Pakistan.

[Translation]

Bofors scam

3853. DR. MAHADEEPAK SINGH SHAKYA:
PROF. PREMSINGH CHANDUMAJRA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether investigation in Bofors Scam that took place in the last decade, has not been completed since the case is pending in Swiss Court;

(b) if so, whether Swiss Court has asked for a comprehensive guarantee from the Indian officials during the last few months;

(c) if so, the reasons for asking such guarantee and the purpose for which the court wants such guarantee;

(d) whether any decision has been taken by the Indian officials in this regard; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the names of the persons, who filed the Bofors Scam case in the Swiss Court?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e). A statement is attached.

STATEMENT

The Government of India had furnished certain guarantees to the Swiss authorities under Article 6 of European Convention for Human Rights and Article 3(3) of International Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters on 10.02.1994. The Cantonal Court of Geneva in its judgement pronounced on 20.12.1995 held that these guarantees were insufficient and that the case may be sent back to the Examining Magistrate of Geneva for obtaining sufficient guarantees from the Government of India. An appeal was filed against the said decision of the Cantonal Court by the Swiss Federal Court (Supreme Court). The appeal filed by the Swiss authorities was allowed by the Swiss Federal Court on 16.04.1996 which held that the guarantees furnished by the Government of India were sufficient.

The names of the appellants who had challenged the guarantees furnished by the Government of India have not been disclosed by the Swiss authorities.

Population Growth

3854. SHRI VIRENDRAKUMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether environment is being polluted due to the increase in population, especially in cities; and

(b) if so, the measures being taken to check the increasing population in the cities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI): (a) Rapid population growth may lead to pressure on environment.

(b) Family Planning Services and information are provided in urban areas through Hospitals, post partum centres, and urban family welfare centres.

As per information given by the Ministry of Urban Affairs and Employment a centrally sponsored scheme named Integrated Development of Small and Medium Towns is under implementation for strengthening infrastructure facilities in selected small and medium towns to enable them to emerge as centres of growth and employment, thereby reducing the incentive for population living in hinterlands to migrate to large cities.

[English]

Travel documents of Indians in Gulf Countries

3855. SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of Indian emigrant workers in the Gulf countries lose their passport and other travel documents; and

(b) if so, the facts thereof and the arrangements that exist in our missions to help such workers?

MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJARAL): (a) There are instances of loss of passports by Indian workers in Gulf countries.

(b) Any Indian Mission which is approached by a worker is authorised to issue a duplicate passport after receiving confirmation of passport particulars from the authority that issued the lost passport. The exact number of such cases are being obtained and would be laid on the Table of the House.