

1	2	3	4	5
4.	Construction of Vivekanand Bridge in Ahmedabad	Municipal Corp. Ahmedabad	1714.91	1190.00
5.	Widening & Construction of M.G. Bridge across river Sabarmati in Ahmedabad.	Municipal Corp. Ahmedabad	836.12	585.24
6.	Widening & Construction of Sardar Patel Bridge Ahmedabad	Municipal Corp. Ahmedabad	914.82	640.35
7.	Construction & Development of 132 ft. road on eastern side of Ahmedabad.	Municipal Corp. Ahmedabad	2051.66	1436.04
8.	Construction & Development of 132 ft. road on western side of Ahmedabad.	Municipal Corp. Ahmedabad	1801.12	1252.87
9.	Improvement of water supply in city of Ahmedabad.	Municipal Corp. Ahmedabad	2331.57	1611.09
Total			16076.47	11195.94

Stranded Nurses in Kuwait

*8. PROF. P.J. KURIEN:

SHRI T. GOVINDAN:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether 250 Indian nurses were recently stranded in Kuwait and sought refuge in the Indian Embassy as they were denied their job and salaries by the recruiting agency;

(b) if so, details thereof and the action taken by the Government in this regard; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take to prevent recurrence of such incidents in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMALA SINHA): (a) to (c) M/s Abdul Aziz Youset Al-Essa, Kuwait recruited 255 nursing assistants through M/s Santosh Travels, Bombay and manpower agencies in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Of these, 180 nurses assistants struck work and took refuge in the Indian Embassy premises on 22nd May, 1997. Their main demand was that the company should pay a salary of KD 85, as verbally promised to them at the time of

recruitment in India, where as the Company was paying KD 60, as per the written agreement.

The Embassy of India, Kuwait made prompt arrangements for food, shelter and adequate medical attendance.

The Embassy also arranged meetings between the company management and the representatives of the nursing assistants. A number of meetings were also arranged with the officials of Ministry of Social Affairs & Labour of Kuwait. The company was not ready to pay more than KD 60 as salary as they had signed a written agreement to that effect, and the nursing assistants were unwilling to work for less than KD 85.

While 35 nursing assistants resumed duty at the stipulated salary of KD 60, 38 others returned to India on tickets provided by the employer, having received all their salary dues. Of the remaining 107 nursing assistants, some have decided to engage a lawyer to take up their case with the Ministry of Social Affairs & Labour or a court and return to India after giving Power of Attorney to the lawyer who will pursue the case in Kuwait. Others have not taken any decision in this regard. While nine of them have left the Embassy on their own, 98 nursing assistants are still

in the Embassy, refusing to leave the premises. This is after repeated assurances given by the officers of the Ministry of Social Affairs & Labour, including Minister of Social Affairs and Labour that it would be ensured that they will not be subjected to any harassment or persecution if they go back to work. However, they are adamant that they would return to work only after a salary of KD 85 is agreed to by the company.

Nurses are exempted from the requirement of Emigration Clearance under present rules. Only in the case of semi-skilled and unskilled workers, emigration clearance is required. In case of any breach of contract, there are adequate mechanisms for redressal in the countries of employment. Therefore, no change in existing regulatory mechanism is envisaged.

[Translation]

Illegal Indian Labourers

*9. SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether several illegal Indian labourers were expelled from United Arab Emirates during the last year;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the number of labourers so expelled;

(c) whether the Government propose to assist them in getting back their employment; and

(d) if so, the details of the steps taken/proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMALA SINHA): (a) to (d) It is estimated that in 1996, about 60,000 Indians returned to India availing of the amnesty scheme declared by the Government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for illegal aliens. The Amnesty scheme, which was originally effective from July 1, 1996 to September 30, 1996 was later extended upto October 31, 1996.

Special counters were set up by the Government of India in select Passport Offices to enable expeditious issue of travel documents to all those who had returned on emergency certificates. The Indian Missions in the UAE kept in close touch with the local authorities to ensure that the returnees did not have any restrictions placed on their return to UAE.

The Government of India estimates that upto May 31, 1997, at least 45,000 Indians had got emigration clearance to take up jobs in the UAE. This number would include a large number of those who had earlier returned from the UAE. To facilitate clearance, Government of India had even suspended the requirement for employment contracts to be pre-screened by Indian Missions in the UAE, so that there was single window clearance of fresh recruitment.

[English]

Development in Afghanistan

*10. SHRI RAGHUNANDAN LAL BHATIA:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) how Government of India views the development in Afghanistan;

(b) whether the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan has a direct bearing on the policies of South Asia; and

(c) the steps the Government of India has taken to see that the situation becomes normal in Afghanistan?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) to (c) India and Afghanistan share historical linkages, civilizational and cultural affinities and warm ties of friendship and cooperation dating back to the remote past. The continuing instability and turmoil and the resultant tragedy and suffering is, therefore, a cause for continuing concern.

These development in Afghanistan, which are closely monitored by Government, have a bearing on India's security and affect the peace and stability of the region.

Government have also been diplomatically active on Afghanistan. There is recognition that India has vital interests in Afghanistan. Government were invited and participated in the Regional Conference on Afghanistan hosted by Iran on 29-30 October, 1996 in Tehran. The UN convened meetings in November 1996 and April 1997 of countries with knowledge, interest and influence regarding Afghanistan to which India was invited. Government's participation was positive and constructive. India also took part in the UN sponsored International Forum for Assistance to Afghanistan held in Ashgabat in January, 1997. India has also been in close touch with countries who take an interest in Afghan affairs.

Our programme of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan in the form of medicines, foodstuff and clothing and supply and fitting of artificial limbs has continued. In addition, India has also pledged to provide humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan through the UN mechanism.

Misuse of Central Fund by States

*11. SHRI G.A. CHARAN REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Planning Commission has warned Chief Ministers that their annual allocations will be drastically cut if they are found misusing funds given for completing Centrally funded projects in the States;

(b) if so, whether the Planning Commission noticed in the past that many State Governments had diverted their funds from Centrally funded projects to other projects; and

(c) if so, names of the States held responsible in