

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.692
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.12.2017**

NITAQAT SCHEME

692. SHRI JAYADEV GALLA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether any consultations have been held with the Saudi officials at the diplomatic and political level in connection with Nitaqat Scheme which is impacting Indian workers;**
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the outcome of the same; and**
- (c) the manner in which the Government is going to protect the interests of Indian workers?**

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]**

(a) to (c) The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been following the policy of Nitaqat (Saudization), since 2011. This broadly aims at increasing the employment opportunities of the Saudi citizens both in the public and private sectors by reducing dependence on the expatriate workers. These efforts of the Saudi side have of late gained momentum after the ongoing slowdown of the economy due to continued low crude oil prices.

The matter has been taken up with the Saudi side in all available fora. The policy is not specifically directed at Indian nationals and the Saudi Government is exercising its prerogative and sovereign right by following this policy uniformly in respect of all foreign nationalities.

There are no wide spread job losses due to the Nitaqat programme. As per the latest figures provided by the Saudi Government, the Indian community in the Kingdom has increased from 3 million in February, 2017 to 3.25 million in September, 2017. The job losses that occurred last year were mainly due to some companies facing economic problems and losses are not attributable to 'Nitaqat'.

The Government has been in regular contact with the Saudi Government towards safeguarding the interests and welfare of the resident Indian community.
