

## Indian repatriates 3,700 prisoners in UAE

5<sup>th</sup> July, 2013



An Indian businessman in the UAE has helped repatriate nearly 3,700 prisoners trapped in a legal limbo in the United Arab Emirates. The ex-prisoners are from

various nations including Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and Pakistan. They had all served their sentences but remained in UAE jails because they lacked the money to pay off the debts that led to their imprisonment, and could not afford the air ticket home. Firoz G. Merchant, 54, owner of the Pure Gold jewellery company, has spent about 3.7 million dirham (\$1,000,000) to secure the prisoners' release. He plans to help out another 1,000 inmates later this year. Mr Merchant said he only helps people who were sentenced over unpaid debts.

Philanthropist Mr Merchant said he was inspired to start helping release prisoners following the UAE's economic downturn in 2010. Thousands of construction workers were laid off and were left saddled with debt from education loans, credit cards and unpaid housing rent. He recalled: "There were a lot of people behind bars, especially labourers....It opened my eyes that this is my duty." He added that it was important for him to ensure the men returned home in time for Ramadan, which starts in the UAE this year on July 10th. He told reporters: "Ramadan is the month for giving, so I want to put greater effort into getting these prisoners back to their own countries...and reunited with their families."

Sources: *Indian Express* / *The National* (UAE)

### Writing

*Giving to charity regularly is a moral duty for anyone with money.* Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

*businessman / legal limbo / ex-prisoners / jails / lacked / debts / air ticket home / philanthropist / inspired / economic downturn / education loan / Ramadan / reunited*

### True / False

- A businessman living in India has helped Emirati prisoners in the UAE. T / F
- The prisoners have all served their sentences. T / F
- The businessman will repatriate 10,000 more later this year. T / F
- All of the prisoners were sentenced because they owed money. T / F
- The UAE's economic woes inspired the businessman to act. T / F
- The businessman felt sorry for labourers who lost their jobs. T / F
- The ex-prisoners won't get home until after Ramadan. T / F
- The businessman said he wants to bring prisoners' families to the UAE. T / F

### Synonym Match

- |                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. businessman | a. prison terms |
| 2. limbo       | b. remembered   |
| 3. sentences   | c. pay for      |
| 4. afford      | d. burdened     |
| 5. secure      | e. energy       |
| 6. inspired    | f. entrepreneur |
| 7. saddled     | g. in prison    |
| 8. recalled    | h. uncertainty  |
| 9. behind bars | i. motivated    |
| 10. effort     | j. guarantee    |

### Discussion – Student A

- Shakespeare said, "Neither a borrower nor a lender be". Do you agree?
- Is it fair to imprison someone for being unable to repay a car loan?
- How can we encourage more philanthropy in the world?
- Do you prefer news like this or news of war, protests and spying?
- How dangerous is it to take out loans and use credit cards?
- Is it the duty of all of us to give regularly to charity (or volunteer)?
- What difference has Mr Merchant made to people's lives?
- Why are some rich people so philanthropic and others so mean?

## Phrase Match

- |                                 |                          |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. 3,700 prisoners trapped in a | a. to their imprisonment |
| 2. They had all served          | b. downturn              |
| 3. pay off the debts that led   | c. bars                  |
| 4. secure the                   | d. legal limbo           |
| 5. sentenced over               | e. time for Ramadan      |
| 6. economic                     | f. their sentences       |
| 7. ...and were left saddled     | g. with their families   |
| 8. a lot of people behind       | h. unpaid debts          |
| 9. returned home in             | i. prisoners' release    |
| 10. reunited                    | j. with debt             |

## Discussion – Student B

- Have you had good / bad / any experiences with debt?
- What do you think of Mr Merchant's actions?
- What do you think being in legal limbo in the UAE would be like?
- Should there be a system to find funds to repatriate such prisoners?
- Wouldn't it be cheaper for the UAE to send the men home rather than keep them in prison?
- Would you give to a charity to help men such as those in the article?
- What 3 adjectives best describe Mr Merchant?
- What do you think of Mr Merchant's policy to only help debtors?

## Spelling

- from ivsuoar nations
- They had all evsdr their sentences
- pay off the tedbs
- could not foafdr the air ticket home
- ersuce the prisoners' release
- another 1,000 emanits
- ohtlrpspitniha Mr Merchant
- irtnnousotcc workers
- this is my dytu
- nrseue the men returned home
- greater fotrfe
- enedutir with their families

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. h	3. a	4. c	5. j
6. i	7. d	8. b	9. g	10. e

## Role Play

### Role A – Poor university students

You think poor university students are most deserving of charity. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their projects don't need so much money. Also, tell the others which is the least deserving of these (and why): elderly homeless, medical research or the World Wildlife Fund.

### Role B – Elderly homeless

You think elderly homeless are most deserving of charity. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their projects don't need so much money. Also, tell the others which is the least deserving of these (and why): poor university students, medical research or the World Wildlife Fund.

### Role C – Medical research

You think medical research is most deserving of charity. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their projects don't need so much money. Also, tell the others which is the least deserving of these (and why): elderly homeless, poor university students or the World Wildlife Fund.

### Role D – World Wildlife Fund

You think the World Wildlife Fund is most deserving of charity. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their projects don't need so much money. Also, tell the others which is the least deserving of these (and why): elderly homeless, medical research or poor university students.

## Speaking

Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the things you think would be worst at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                   |                     |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| • the cell        | • the stigma        |
| • other prisoners | • boredom           |
| • the food        | • not seeing family |
| • prison bars     | • the shower room   |

### Answers – True False

a F b T c F d T e T f T g F h F

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.