

Pradesh. Indian territory under the occupation of China in Jammu & Kashmir is approximately 38,000 sq.kms. In addition, under the so-called China-Pakistan "Boundary Agreement" signed between China and Pakistan on 2 March 1963, Pakistan illegally ceded 5,180 sq. kms. of Indian territory in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir to China.

(c) and (d) China regards the issue of Jammu and Kashmir as a dispute that should be settled properly through dialogue between India and Pakistan. Government has taken up the matter with the Chinese side and has conveyed Government's clear and consistent position that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India.

Protection of Indian workers abroad

1605. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention have drawn towards the concerns of the Indian workers in parts of other countries for their wages and safeguards;

(b) if so, Government's response towards the protection of the Indian workers in foreign countries;

(c) whether Government is considering to make any agreements with the countries for protecting the rights of Indian workers; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) Complaints from Indian workers relating to non-payment, arbitrary reduction or delay in payment of wages, longer working hours and lack of accommodation, food and medical facilities etc are received by the Indian missions in the Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries from-time to time.

(b) to (d) Whenever, a complaint is received, action is initiated by the Ministry for suspension or cancellation of the Registration Certificate of the Recruiting Agent. If required, requisite legal action is also initiated against the concerned Recruiting Agent. Complaints filed against illegal agents are referred to the State Governments. When there is a complaint against a foreign employer, proceedings for black listing such employer are initiated. Indian missions also take up these issues with the foreign employers/local governments to protect the welfare of the workers.

The Government has taken several initiatives to protect the welfare of Overseas Indian Workers which *inter alia* include:

- (i) The Ministry has notified the Emigration (Amendment) Rules 2009 on 9th July, 2009 revising the eligibility criteria of Recruiting Agents (RAs) and increasing the security amount and service charges.
- (ii) A Nation wide Awareness-cum-Publicity Campaign through media has been launched to educate intending emigrants about legal emigration procedures, risk of illegal migration and precautions to be taken during emigration.
- (iii) The Ministry has set up the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) in 42 Countries for providing onsite support and financial assistance to Indian workers in distress.
- (iv) The Government has established an Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) which is a 24 hour telephone helpline in seven languages to provide authentic information to intending emigrants as well as emigrants on all aspects of emigration.
- (v) Indian Workers' Resource Centre (IWRC) is also functioning at Dubai for taking care of emergency needs of Indian workers.
- (vi) India had signed Labour Agreements with Jordan and Qatar in 1980s to protect the interest of the Indian Workers. Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) were signed with United Arab Emirates (UAE) in December, 2006, with Kuwait in April, 2007, with Oman in November 2008, with Malaysia in January 2009, and with Bahrain in June 2009. An Additional Protocol to the existing Labour Agreement between India and Qatar was signed in November, 2007.
- (vii) These MOUs enhance bilateral co-operation in management of migration and protection of labour welfare. Under these MOUs a Joint Working Groups (JWG) have been constituted that meet regularly in order to resolve bilateral labour issues.

Steps to safeguard students

1606. SHRI SHIVANAND TIWARI : Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government proposes to contemplate any steps to safeguard the interest of students going abroad;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and