

1	2	3	4	5
Malaysia	19457	20976	22014	14376
Oman	74889	80334	57337	31585
Qatar	45528	66901	79631	44034
Sudan	1003	399	217	86
Syria	118	5	5	0
The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	299276	377494	339857	197141
Thailand	25	7	27	42
UAE	141744	147370	220392	130267
Yemen	0	0	5	1
TOTAL	649794	776672	820947	479463

Complaints from Indians in Gulf countries

1327. DR. T.N. SEEMA: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the number of Indian citizens staying/employed in Gulf countries, country-wise;

(b) whether Government has received many complaints from Indian workers from time to time about bad working conditions, inadequate living conditions, physical harassment, refusal to pay for the medical treatment, denial of leave and refusal of leave or exit/re-entry permits/ final exit visa etc.

(c) if so, the details including the number of complaints received during last three years and the current year, country-wise; and

(d) the steps taken by Government/ Indian Missions abroad to resolve the issues along with the details and the success achieved as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS; GENERAL (RETD.) V.K. SINGH): (a) The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) deals with Emigration Check Required (ECR) passport holders going to ECR countries. Hence, number of emigrants emigrated to 18 ECR countries including Gulf countries during the last three years is given in Statement-I (*See below*).

(b) to (d) Yes, generally complaints are received from Indian workers, from time to time, in the nature of non-payment/ delayed payment or underpayment of salaries, long working hours, inadequate living conditions, physical harassment, non-renewal of visa and labour card on time, refusal to pay for the medical treatment, denial of leave and air-ticket to the hometown on completion of contract period, forcible custody of Passport and Visa, refusal of leave or 'exit-re-entry permits'/'final exit visa' etc.

Country-wise and year-wise number of complaints received in respect of ECR Gulf countries during the last three year and upto 31st October, 2014 is as under:

Name of the ECR Countries	No. of Complaints			
	Years			
	2011	2012	2013	2014 (till 31st October, 2014)
Bahrain	1158	825	838	756
Kuwait	2854	3593	2887	2793
Oman	2889	2361	1781	1146
Qatar	3186	3385	3558	3326
Saudi Arabia	2330	2781	2608	2973
UAE	2184	1578	1104	1346

Whenever a complaint is received from any Indian worker abroad, action is initiated by the Ministry by asking the concerned Indian Mission to look into the matter. If the complaint is received by the Indian Mission, the Indian Mission also initiates action to resolve the issue by getting in touch with the foreign employer/local authorities and emigrant worker concerned and visiting Indian labour camps, if required, and actively pursuing until their logical conclusion, whenever necessary, the complainant is also provided counseling and accordingly referred to concerned labour office/court, Immigration and Police authorities etc. The Missions also provide interpreting services to the Indian complainants.

Software module for online registration of grievance and its redressal has been made available in the eMigrate project.

Other initiatives taken by the Government to protect the welfare of overseas Indian workers are given in Statement-II (*See below*).

In addition to the above referred complaints, the Ministry in collaboration with Indian Mission in Saudi Arabia also handled issues pertaining to the Nitaqat programme

and also the correction of legal status of undocumented workers. According to the Saudi authorities, till end-October 2013, more than 14 lakh Indians have availed the concessions during the grace period. This includes 434667 Indians who transferred their services to other firms, 481233 Indians who changed their jobs/profession and over 470000 Indians who renewed their license/job permits. The number of Indians who left on final exit (as on November 27, 2013) is 141301.

As a result of efforts put in by the Ministry and the Indian Missions, in large number of cases troubled emigrants have been repatriated and in deserving cases airfare was also borne from the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) In several cases free legal aid to the distressed emigrants was provided from ICWF and around 28000 emigrants have been benefited from the scheme during the last three years and ₹37 crore have been utilized for the purpose. Over 5000 emigrants in distress from Iraq and Libya have also been evacuated

Ministry has launched a soft-ware module in the Ministry's website in which dependents of deceased emigrant can make entries relating to deceased emigrants and the concerned Indian Mission immediately acts on such requests in order to facilitate transportation of mortal remains and Ministry has also been keeping a close watch over this sensitive issue through this module. As a result of which during the period of 1st August, 2014 to 31st October, 2014, in respect of 390 cases mortal remains have been brought back to India/last rites were performed in the host country.

As and when emigrant's grievances relating to wage, adverse living and working conditions are received, the same are referred to concerned Indian Missions and the grievances are being redressed.

Statement-I

Emigration Clearance granted to workers emigrated to Gulf and other ECR countries during the last three years

Sl. No.	Country	April 2011- March 2012	April 2012- March 2013	April 2013- March 2014
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Afghanistan	378	95	200
2.	Bahrain	16573	20598	15073
5.	Indonesia	21	25	34
4.	Iraq	1074	1903	7379
5.	Jordan	1751	1447	1638

1	2	3	4	5
6.	Kuwait	47442	58865	76474
7.	Lebanon	515	252	249
8.	Libya	0	1	415
9.	Malaysia	19457	20976	22014
10.	Oman	74889	80334	57337
11.	Qatar	45528	66901	79631
12.	Sudan	1003	399	217
13.	Syria	118	5	5
14.	The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	299276	377494	339857
15.	Thailand	25	7	27
16.	UAE	141744	147370	220392
17.	Yemen	0	0	5
TOTAL		649794	776672	820947

Statement-II

*Details of several initiatives taken by Government to protect
the welfare of overseas Indian workers*

- (i) A 24x7 toll-free helpline viz. Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) has been set up in Delhi to enable emigrants/ prospective emigrants to seek information and file complaints against Recruiting Agents/ Foreign Employers.
- (ii) Migration Resource Centres (MRCs) at Cochin, Hyderabad and Panchkula (Haryana).
- (iii) A Nation-wide Awareness-cum-Publicity Campaign through Media to educate potential emigrants including benefits or hazards of legal and illegal migration respectively.
- (iv) Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) has been established in all the Indian Missions for on-site welfare of emigrants. Around 28,000 emigrants have benefited from the Scheme during the last three years and ₹37 crores has been utilized for the purpose.

- (v) For redressal of grievances at Dubai at the Indian Workers Resource Centre (IWRC) there is a 24X7 toll free multilingual helpline.

Other Missions also have helpline/help desk to attend to grievances of Indian nationals.

- (vi) Computerized emigration clearance system exists in all POE offices. Security stickers are now pasted on the passport, giving information about the RAs, name of foreign employer, occupation, wages, insurance policy number, passport/visa number and the helpline number.
- (vii) Memorandum of Understanding on employment of workers (MoU): India has signed Labour agreements with Jordan and Qatar in 1980s. The Ministry, after its creation in 2004, made concerted efforts to enter into bilateral Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with the major receiving Countries for ensuring protection and welfare of our emigrants. 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, Saudi Arabia in January, 2014. An Additional Protocol to the existing Labour Agreement between India and Qatar was signed in November, 2007.
- (viii) In addition, the Government has taken the following measures for protecting the safety and welfare of women workers of the ECR (Emigration Check Required) category to emigrate to 17 notified countries:
- (i) Age restriction of 30 years for women emigrating on ECR passports to ECR countries.
 - (ii) Minimum referral wage for emigrants fixed by Mission.
 - (iii) Security deposit of US\$ 2500 to be paid by foreign employer
 - (iv) Compulsory pre-attestation of employment documents by the Indian Mission concerned for all women emigrants.
 - (v) Pre-paid mobile phone facility for Housemaids to be provided by foreign employer.
 - (vi) Operating shelters for distressed emigrants by Indian Missions.

Labour migration policy with Saudi Arabia

1328. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether thousands of Indian workers are languishing in Saudi Arabia in unfair working conditions;