

**Policies to regulate overseas employment**

1135. DR. BANDA PRAKASH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of existing policies to regulate overseas employment;
- (b) whether Government has brought any new policies for the same during the last one year;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the details of plans run specifically to ensure security of blue collar workers engaged in overseas employment; and
- (e) the manner in which the Ministry ensures hassle-free passport and documentation for such uneducated workers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GENERAL (RETD.) V. K. SINGH]: (a) to (d) During the last four-and-half years, the Government has put in place a robust institutional framework towards ensuring the welfare, safety and to prevent exploitation of Indian workers going abroad. Salient initiatives for ensuring welfare and safety of our workers include:

MADAD: The MADAD portal is an online platform for redressal of consular grievances and extending support to Indian nationals abroad in need of consular assistance. The MADAD portal is integrated with e-Migrate system.

e-Migrate System: e-Migrate portal is an online platform that brings together all stakeholders involved in labour recruitment to ECR countries. Since its inception, over 2 million Emigration Clearance (EC) have been issued. About 1300 Recruitment Agents and around 1,60,000 Foreign Employers are registered on eMigrate. The portal is integrated with Passport Seva Project (PSP) for validation of passport details of ECR category workers. The system is also aligned with the Bureau of Immigration.

Safeguarding interests of female workers: As per extant guidelines, the minimum age of ECR category female workers proceeding for overseas employment to ECR countries is 30 years. Their emigration for overseas employment is permitted only through the seven designated state run recruitment agencies or through the Foreign Employer registered on e-Migrate system. In case of direct recruit by Foreign Employer, attestation of work contract by the Indian Mission in the destination country and submission of a bank guarantee of US \$ 2500 is mandatory before the emigration clearance is granted by the Office of Protector of Emigrants.

Indian Community Welfare Fund: The ICWF guidelines, comprehensively revised with effect from September 1, 2017, have considerably expanded the scope of on-site welfare activities for the benefit of distressed Indian nationals that could be extended through the Fund. The guidelines cover three key areas namely Assisting Overseas Indian nationals in distress situations (Boarding and Lodging, Air passage, Legal Assistance, Emergency Medical Care, Transportation of Mortal Remains), Community Welfare activities and Improvement in Consular services. Around 90,000 Indian nationals already have been benefited under this scheme since 2014.

Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana : The Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY), a mandatory insurance scheme for Emigration Check Required (ECR) category workers going to ECR countries for overseas employment, provides an insurance cover of ₹ 10 lakhs in case of accidental death or permanent disability and some other benefits at a nominal insurance premium of ₹ 275/₹ 375 for a period of two/three years. The Scheme stands comprehensively revamped *w.e.f.* August 1, 2017. The scheme now provides for global coverage irrespective of employer and location and has facility for online renewal and is aimed at ensuring an expeditious settlement of claims.

Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendras (PBSKs) and other support: Migrant workers can seek assistance and also register their grievances with the Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendra (PBSK) at New Delhi which provides assistance 24x7 in different Indian languages. In addition, there are Kshetriya Pravasi Sahayata Kendras at Kochi, Hyderabad, Delhi, Chennai and Lucknow. In abroad, PBSKs in Riyadh, Jeddah, Dubai, Sharjah and Kuala Lumpur are also functional. Toll free Help lines are also available with our Missions and Posts who also conduct Open Houses on regular basis. Shelter Homes have also been set up.

Pre-Departure Orientation: One-day Pre-Departure Orientation Training (PDOT) Programme has been rolled for the workers going to the Gulf region from the beginning of this year. More than 30,000 workers have been imparted one-day PDOT as on date. Presently, two Centres each in New Delhi and Mumbai and one Centre in Kochi is operational.

(e) There are ten Protector of Emigrants (POE) offices in different parts of the country that are aimed at providing necessary support and documentation to our migrant workers. The network of Passport Offices and Passport Seva Kendras has undergone an unprecedented expansion with over 300 Centers all over the country. Kshetriya Pravasi Sahayata Kendras (KPSK) are also functional in Kochi, Hyderabad, Delhi, Chennai and Lucknow.