

Complaints from Indian workers abroad

3690. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR GUPTA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Ministry has received any complaints from the Indian workers in other countries for unpaid wages and pitiable working conditions;
- (b) if so, the number of such complaints received during the last one year; and
- (c) the steps taken to help these workers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN): (a) and (b) Information regarding Indian workers holding ECR Passports, going for overseas employment to 18 notified Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries (namely Afghanistan, Bahrain, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Oman, Qatar, North Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, Thailand, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen), is maintained by this Ministry. As per information given by our Missions and Posts in the Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries, the number of complaints by Indian workers due to various reasons during 2018 are as follows:—

Sl. No.	Country	2018
1.	Bahrain	734
2.	Qatar	3244
3.	Saudi Arabia	8272
4.	Oman	3594
5.	Kuwait	3287
6.	United Arab Emirates	2153
7.	Indonesia	8
8.	Lebanon	67
9.	Thailand	Nil
10.	Afghanistan	1
11.	Malaysia	4514

Sl. No.	Country	2018
12.	Jordan	5
13.	South Sudan	Nil
14.	Iraq	166
15.	Sudan	Nil
16.	Syria	40
17.	Libya	10

Most of the complaints received from and on behalf of Indian workers are regarding non-payment of salaries and denial of legitimate labour rights and benefits such as non-issuance/renewal of residence permits, non-payment/grant of overtime allowance, weekly holidays, longer working hours, refusal to grant exit/re-entry permits for visit to India, refusal to allow the workers on final exit visa after completion of their contracts, non-provision of medical and insurance facilities, and non-payment of compensation to the next of kin upon death of the worker, etc.

(c) On receipt of complaints from or on behalf of the emigrants, the same are addressed urgently by the Indian Missions by taking them up with the concerned local Government authorities for resolution. Complaints pertaining to employment related issues are taken up by the Indian Missions with the concerned foreign employer/Labour Department and other concerned officials in that country for prompt redressal. The Government has taken several steps to safeguard the interests of Indian emigrants to the Gulf and other ECR countries. These include:—

- (i) The online MADAD portal enables the emigrant workers and their family members to register their consular grievances online and track their redressal.
- (ii) Grievances related to Overseas Employment in notified Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries can also be lodged directly by emigrants/relatives or through the Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendra (PBSK) on e-Migrate portal. These grievances are settled by respective jurisdictional Protectors of Emigrants (PoEs) as per laid down procedures.
- (iii) Indian Missions conduct Open Houses on a regular basis where workers can speak on their working conditions and seek redressal of their grievances.

- (iv) A multi-lingual 24X7 Helpline of Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendra (PBSK) in New Delhi provides information, guidance and grievance redressal on all issues and problems pertaining to overseas employment of Indian nationals.
- (v) Missions have also established 24x7 Helplines and Toll Free Helplines for the benefit of Indian workers to seek help.
- (vi) Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendras (PBSKs) have been set up at Dubai (UAE), Sharjah (UAE), Riyadh, Jeddah (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), to provide guidance and counseling on all matters pertaining to overseas Indian workers.
- (vii) Kshetriya Pravasi Sahayata Kendras (KPSKs) have also been setup in Kochi, Hyderabad, Chennai and Lucknow to assist emigrants or their relatives to redress their problems/complaints regarding overseas employment.
- (viii) Grievances brought to the notice of the Ministry and the Missions through social media, including twitter, are also promptly addressed.
- (ix) The Missions utilise the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) to provide assistance to overseas Indian nationals in times of distress. The guidelines of the Indian community welfare fund have been revised recently to expand the scope of welfare measures and to cover three key areas, namely, assisting overseas Indian nationals in distress situations, community welfare activities and improvement in consular services.
- (x) Labour and Manpower Cooperation MoUs/Agreements are in place with the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries that provide the institutional framework to comprehensively discuss and review labour related issues. In accordance with the Labour and Manpower Cooperation/Agreement, Joint Working Group (JWG) meetings are held on regular basis to discuss various labour related issues.

External funding to research organisations

3691. SHRI BINOY VISWAM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government provides external fundings to research organisations and independent think tanks; and