

**Harassment of Indians working abroad**

\*206. SHRI VAIKO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether many Indians working abroad especially in Gulf countries are subjected to harassment and punishment by the employers;

(b) if so, the number of such cases which have come to the notice of Government in the last three years, through the Embassy officials, complainants or other sources;

(c) the reason for the Indian Embassy officials failing to protect the interests of Indian workers; and

(d) the steps taken to protect all the Indian workers in the Gulf countries from illegal means of exploitation and harassment by the greedy employers, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. JAISHANKAR): (a) From time to time, Indian Embassies and Consulates receive complaints from Indian workers facing problems due to their employers not following the relevant regulations. These include, grievances and complaints related to maltreatment, violation of contractual terms, adverse working conditions, wage related issues, employer related problems, medical and insurance related problems and compensation/death claims.

(b) As per information provided by our Missions and Posts in the Gulf countries, the number of complaints registered by Indian workers are as follows:

Sl. No.	Country	2017	2018	2019
1.	Bahrain	792	734	836
2.	Qatar	3328	3244	2896
3.	Saudi Arabia	5076	8271	7973
4.	Oman	4144	3594	2984
5.	Kuwait	4481	3287	5286
6.	United Arab Emirates	3756	2153	2888

(c) The Indian Embassies and Consulates, whenever a complaint is registered with them, take the required steps immediately to address the grievance. Wherever required, Indian Missions also help, to the extent possible, fight cases in local courts in the event of complaints requiring legal intervention.

(d) The Government has taken several steps to protect the interests of Indian emigrants in the Gulf countries from exploitation and harassment by foreign employers. These include awareness, grievance redressal and welfare measures:

- (i) Departing workers are made aware of their rights and responsibilities through the Pre Departure Orientation Training (PDOT) and local language based Media Awareness Campaign.
- (ii) The on-line MADAD portal enables the emigrant workers and their family members to register their consular grievances on-line and track their redressal.
- (iii) Grievances can also be lodged by emigrants/relatives 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.
- (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. Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendras (PBSK) have also been set up at Dubai (UAE), Sharjah (UAE), Riyadh, Jeddah (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). Kshetriya Pravasi Sahayata Kendras (KPSK) have been setup in Kochi, Hyderabad, Chennai, Lucknow and Delhi.
- (v) Indian Missions conduct Open Houses on a regular basis where workers can speak on their working conditions and seek redressal of their grievances. Indian Missions have also established 24x7 Helplines and Toll Free Helplines for the benefit of Indian workers to seek help.
- (vi) Grievances brought to the notice of the Ministry and the Missions through social media, including twitter, are promptly addressed.
- (vii) 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 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. The distressed female Indian workers approaching Missions/Posts are provided temporary shelter till their cases are resolved.

- (viii) 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 and Joint Working Group (JWG) meetings are held on regular basis.

**Agreement signed between India and the US**

\*207. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of agreements in various sectors signed between India and the US during the recent visit of US President to India;
- (b) the equipments that the US has agreed to sell to India for the Indian armed forces, in the defence deals, with details;
- (c) whether any agreement for providing R&D, maintenance and servicing of these equipments in India was signed, if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) if not, the mechanism through which the state-of-the-art technology would be maintained and serviced in India?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. JAISHANKAR): (a) The documents concluded during the State Visit of the President of the United States of America, Donald J. Trump, to India in February 2020, are as below:

- (i) Memorandum of Understanding on Mental Health between the Department of Health and Family Welfare of the Government of the Republic of India and the Department of Health and Human Services of the Government of the United States of America.