

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 2787
ANSWERED ON- 19/12/2024

ILLEGAL MIGRATION FROM INDIA

2787. DR. V. SIVADASAN

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-

- (a) the number of Indian citizens who have been arrested or detained for illegal migration to foreign countries, country-wise, year-wise for the last five years;
- (b) the number of Indian citizens who have been brought back in such cases, country-wise, year-wise for the last five years;
- (c) the measures adopted by Government to protect the citizens who are arrested or detained; and
- (d) whether Government plans to have any campaign to address this issue?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a & b) Government does not have specific data on the number of Indian nationals arrested or detained in foreign countries for illegal migration as many countries do not share such information due to prevailing privacy laws.

(c) The Government accords high priority to the safety, security and well-being of Indian nationals in foreign countries, including those in the foreign jails. Once information about detention/arrest of an Indian national is received by the Indian Embassies/Consulates, it immediately gets in touch with the Foreign Office and other concerned local authorities to get consular access in order to ascertain the facts of the case, confirm his/her Indian nationality and to ensure protection of his/her rights and well being.

Apart from extending all possible consular assistance to Indian nationals arrested or detained abroad, Indian Embassies/Consulates also provide legal aid wherever needed. Embassies/Consulates also maintain a local panel of lawyers where Indian community is in sizeable numbers. The expenditure on legal assistance is met from Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) set up in the Embassies/Consulates on case to case basis. Embassies/Consulates abroad also pursue with the local law enforcement agencies to complete the investigation and judicial proceedings at the earliest possible.

The Government also follows up such cases through diplomatic channels including consular dialogue and other consultation process with foreign countries. In addition, the Government, through its Embassies/Consulates abroad and during high level visits, also take up and pursue grant of amnesty/commutation of sentences of Indian prisoners in foreign countries appropriately. India has also entered into MoU on transfer of sentenced persons with some countries that allow transfer of person convicted to his/her home country to serve remaining prison term.

(d) To promote legal migration, Ministry has taken several initiatives such as Pravasi Bhartiya Bima Yojna (PBBY) and Pre-Departure Orientation & Training (PDOT) in ensuring that migrant workers undertake safe migration, have decent working and living conditions in destination countries, are aware of their rights and have access to the Government's welfare schemes. Further, Ministry of External Affairs launched the 'Surakshit Jayen Prashikshit Jayen' (Go Safe, Go Trained) campaign in 2018 to raise awareness among prospective emigrants.

India has also signed Migration & Mobility Partnership Agreements (MMPAs) and Labour Mobility Agreements (LMAs) to establish a robust framework for strengthening regular migration pathways and to promote people-to-people ties, streamline visa procedures, prevent irregular migration, further strengthen bilateral relations, and encourage skilled mobility.

The Ministry also coordinates with the State Governments and relevant stakeholders to disseminate information on the benefits of safe and legal migration for overseas employment.
