

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 32
ANSWERED ON 06.02.2025

MONITORING OF INDIAN STUDENTS ABROAD POST-CONFLICT ESCALATIONS

*32. DR. SYED NASEER HUSSAIN:

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) the total number of Indian students affected by ongoing conflicts in Israel, Palestine and Ukraine till date;
- (b) the specific measures taken to assist these students, including financial and academic aid; and
- (c) the manner in which Government is collaborating with foreign universities to ensure minimal academic disruption?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(DR. SUBRAHMANYAM JAISHANKAR)

(a) to (c): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (C) IN RESPECT OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 32 FOR REPLY ON 06.02.2025 REGARDING MONITORING OF INDIAN STUDENTS ABROAD POST-CONFLICT ESCALATIONS ASKED BY DR. SYED NASEER HUSSAIN.

The response to the question is as follows:

Ukraine:

There were 21,928 Indian students before the start of the conflict in Ukraine. However, as on November 01, 2024, only 1802 students were enrolled in various Ukrainian Universities.

During the initial stages of the conflict in Ukraine, keeping in view the deteriorating security situation in Ukraine, the Indian Embassy in Kyiv had issued travel and security advisories to the Indian students studying in Ukraine. After the start of the conflict, the Indian Government, through its Mission in Ukraine, had proactively supported distressed/ stranded Indian students. This support included active liaison with the Ukrainian Government and University authorities to arrange safe accommodation, facilitating their return under “Operation Ganga”, arrangements made for their movements in consultation with the neighbouring countries of Ukraine, and providing food, shelter and emergency medical care/medicine. A total of 18,282 Indian nationals including students were evacuated under Operation Ganga launched by the Government of India in February/March 2022. Subsequently, most of the students got themselves transferred from Ukrainian Universities to other countries viz., Kazakhstan, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Russia, Serbia, Bosnia, Poland, Hungary and Moldova.

Since the early days of the conflict, the Government of India has been in touch with the educational authorities in Ukraine regarding the continuation of studies by Indian students who returned from Ukraine. The Indian Mission in Ukraine has maintained constant touch with all concerned Ukrainian authorities, universities and student communities to resolve the issues faced by Indian students studying in Ukraine.

National Medical Commission (NMC) of India in September 2022 had clarified that it has no objection on permanent transfer of Indian medical students to universities in third countries in respect of medical students covered under Screening Test Regulations, 2002. It also permitted academic mobility to universities in specified third countries in respect of these students. NMC further clarified that medical students were allowed to undergo online classes of theory subjects which should be supplemented by offline practical and clinical training done in the Medical University and /or its affiliated Hospitals during their MBBS course.

Currently, the ground situation in Ukraine remains volatile for return of students. As a result, the number of students seeking admission in various Ukrainian Universities has come down sharply. Ukrainian side has also reiterated its willingness to allow Indian students to continue their courses online.

Israel:

There are around 900 Indian students in Israel, who are mostly enrolled in PhD or Post-doctoral studies in STEM fields. Following the 07 October 2023 attacks in Israel, Government of India launched *Operation Ajay* to facilitate safe return of Indian nationals under which 1309 Indians returned to India. This included 768 Indian students. Since then, almost all the Indian students who

had returned to India under *Operation Ajay*, have reached Israel, to resume their research/studies in the Israeli universities.

Embassy of India in Israel set up a 24-hour Control Room to monitor the situation and provide information and assistance to Indian nationals, including Indian students. In addition, 24-hour emergency helplines were also set up at the Embassy for extending assistance to all Indians, including Indian students, in Israel. Embassy has maintained constant touch with the nodal student coordinators and also with the International Student Departments of all the universities where Indian students are enrolled to ensure their well-being. Embassy has not received complaint about academic disruptions in Israeli universities.

Palestine::

There is no Indian student in Palestine.

भारत सरकार
विदेश मंत्रालय
राज्य सभा
तारांकित प्रश्न संख्या - 32
दिनांक 06.02.2025 को उत्तर दिए जाने के लिए

संघर्ष बढ़ने के बाद विदेशों में भारतीय छात्रों की निगरानी

*32. डॉ. सैयद नसीर हुसैन:

क्या विदेश मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

- (क) इजराइल, फिलिस्तीन और यूक्रेन में चल रहे संघर्षों के कारण आज की तिथि तक कुल कितने भारतीय छात्र प्रभावित हुए हैं;
(ख) इन छात्रों की सहायता के लिए वित्तीय और शैक्षणिक सहायता सहित और कौन-से विशिष्ट उपाय किए गए हैं; और
(ग) अल्पतम शैक्षणिक व्यवधान को सुनिश्चित करने के लिए सरकार विदेशी विश्वविद्यालयों के साथ किस प्रकार सहयोग कर रही है?

उत्तर
विदेश मंत्री
(डॉ. सुब्रह्मण्यम जयशंकर)

(क) से (ग): वक्तव्य सभा पटल पर रख दिया गया है।

‘संघर्ष बढ़ने के बाद विदेशों में भारतीय छात्रों की निगरानी’ के संबंध में दिनांक 06.02.2025 को उत्तरार्थ डॉ.सैयद नसीर हुसैन द्वारा पूछे गए राज्य सभा तारांकित प्रश्न संख्या 32 के भाग (क) से (ग) के उत्तर में उल्लिखित वक्तव्य।

प्रश्न का उत्तर निम्नानुसार है:

यूक्रेन:

यूक्रेन में संघर्ष शुरू होने से पूर्व 21,928 भारतीय छात्र थे। तथापि 01 नवंबर, 2024 तक केवल 1802 छात्र ही विभिन्न यूक्रेनी विश्वविद्यालयों में नामांकित थे।

यूक्रेन में संघर्ष के शुरुआती चरणों के दौरान, यूक्रेन में बिगड़ती सुरक्षा स्थिति को ध्यान में रखते हुए, कीव स्थित भारतीय दूतावास ने यूक्रेन में पढ़ रहे भारतीय छात्रों को यात्रा और सुरक्षा परामर्शी जारी की थी। संघर्ष की शुरुआत के बाद, भारत सरकार ने यूक्रेन स्थित अपने मिशन के माध्यम से संकटग्रस्त/फंसे हुए भारतीय छात्रों को सक्रिय रूप से सहायता प्रदान की थी। इस सहायता में सुरक्षित आवास की व्यवस्था करने के लिए यूक्रेनी सरकार और विश्वविद्यालय अधिकारियों के साथ सक्रिय संपर्क, “ऑपरेशन गंगा” के तहत उनकी वापसी को सुविधाजनक बनाने, यूक्रेन के पड़ोसी देशों के परामर्श से उनकी आवाजाही की व्यवस्था करना और भोजन, आश्रय तथा आपातकालीन चिकित्सा देखभाल/दवा प्रदान करना शामिल था। फरवरी/मार्च 2022 में भारत सरकार द्वारा शुरू किए गए ऑपरेशन गंगा के तहत छात्रों सहित कुल 18,282 भारतीय नागरिकों को सुरक्षित रूप से निकाला गया। इसके बाद, अधिकांश छात्रों ने खुद को यूक्रेनी विश्वविद्यालयों से दूसरे देशों जैसे कजाकिस्तान, जॉर्जिया, उज्बेकिस्तान, रूस, सर्बिया, बॉस्निया, पोलैंड, हंगरी और मोल्दोवा में स्थानांतरित कर लिया था।

संघर्ष के शुरुआती दिनों से ही भारत सरकार यूक्रेन से लौटे भारतीय छात्रों की पढाई जारी रखने के संबंध में यूक्रेन के शैक्षणिक अधिकारियों के संपर्क में रही है। यूक्रेन स्थित भारतीय मिशन यूक्रेन में पढ़ रहे भारतीय छात्रों के सामने आने वाली समस्याओं के समाधान के लिए सभी संबंधित यूक्रेनी अधिकारियों, विश्वविद्यालयों और छात्र समुदायों के साथ लगातार संपर्क में है।

भारत के राष्ट्रीय चिकित्सा आयोग (एनएमसी) ने सितम्बर 2022 में स्पष्ट किया था कि स्क्रीनिंग टेस्ट रेगुलेशन, 2002 के अंतर्गत आने वाले मेडिकल छात्रों के संबंध में तीसरे देशों के विश्वविद्यालयों में भारतीय मेडिकल छात्रों के स्थायी स्थानांतरण पर उन्हें कोई आपत्ति नहीं है। उन्होंने इन छात्रों के संबंध में निर्दिष्ट तीसरे देशों के विश्वविद्यालयों में अकादमिक आवाजाही की भी अनुमति दी थी। एनएमसी ने आगे यह भी स्पष्ट किया कि मेडिकल छात्रों को सैद्धांतिक विषयों की ऑनलाइन कक्षाएँ करने की अनुमति दी गई थी, जिसे उनके एमबीबीएस पाठ्यक्रम के दौरान मेडिकल विश्वविद्यालय और/या इसके संबद्ध अस्पतालों में किए गए ऑफ़लाइन व्यावहारिक और नैदानिक प्रशिक्षण द्वारा पूरक किया जाना चाहिए।

वर्तमान में, यूक्रेन में छात्रों की वापसी के लिए वास्तविक स्थिति अस्थिर बनी हुई है। इसके परिणामस्वरूप, विभिन्न यूक्रेनी विश्वविद्यालयों में प्रवेश लेने वाले छात्रों की संख्या में तेजी से कमी आई है। यूक्रेनी पक्ष ने

भारतीय छात्रों को ऑनलाइन अपने पाठ्यक्रम जारी रखने की अनुमति देने की अपनी इच्छा भी दोहराई है।

इजराइल:

इजराइल में लगभग 900 भारतीय छात्र हैं, जो ज्यादातर एसटीईएम क्षेत्रों में पीएचडी या पोस्ट-डॉक्टरल अध्ययन में नामांकित हैं। इजराइल में 07 अक्टूबर 2023 को हुए हमलों के बाद, भारत सरकार ने भारतीय नागरिकों की सुरक्षित वापसी को सुविधाजनक बनाने के लिए ऑपरेशन अजय शुरू किया, जिसके तहत 1309 भारतीय भारत लौटे थे। इनमें 768 भारतीय छात्र शामिल थे। तब से, ऑपरेशन अजय के तहत भारत लौटे लगभग सभी भारतीय छात्र इजराइल पहुँच चुके हैं, ताकि वे इजराइली विश्वविद्यालयों में अपना शोध/अध्ययन फिर से शुरू कर सकें।

इजराइल स्थित भारतीय दूतावास ने स्थिति पर नज़र रखने और भारतीय छात्रों सहित भारतीय नागरिकों को जानकारी और सहायता प्रदान करने के लिए 24 घंटे का नियंत्रण कक्ष स्थापित किया है। इसके अलावा, इजराइल में भारतीय छात्रों सहित सभी भारतीयों को सहायता प्रदान करने के लिए दूतावास में 24 घंटे की आपातकालीन हेल्पलाइन भी स्थापित की गई है। दूतावास ने नोडल छात्र समन्वयकों और उन सभी विश्वविद्यालयों के अंतर्राष्ट्रीय छात्र विभागों के साथ लगातार संपर्क बना रखा है जहाँ भारतीय छात्र नामांकित हैं ताकि उनका हित सुनिश्चित किया जा सके। दूतावास को इजराइली विश्वविद्यालयों में शैक्षणिक व्यवधानों के बारे में कोई शिकायत नहीं मिली है।

फिलिस्तीन:

फिलीस्तीन में कोई भारतीय छात्र नहीं है।

डा. सैयद नासिर हुसैन: सर, हम लोगों ने पहली बार देखा था कि हिंदुस्तान के प्रधान मंत्री ने दूसरे देश में जाकर दूसरे देश के presidential कैंडिडेट के लिए campaign किया था और उन्होंने अब सरकार भी बना ली है, लेकिन अचानक मोदी जी के वे मित्र President बनते ही...

श्री उपसभापति: आप सवाल पूछिए।

डा. सैयद नासिर हुसैन: सर, सवाल वही है। * ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री उपसभापति : आपका सवाल क्या है? ...(व्यवधान)... No, Shri Nasir Hussainji nothing, ...(Interruptions)... आपका सवाल - Monitoring of Indian students abroad post-conflict escalations. ...(Interruptions)... Nothing is going on record. अगर आप सवाल पूछेंगे, तो ...(व्यवधान)...

डा. सैयद नासिर हुसैन : *(व्यवधान)... मेरा सवाल यह है। ...(व्यवधान)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, I will not allow. ...(Interruptions)... Nothing will go on record. ...(Interruptions)... रिकॉर्ड पर नहीं जाएगा। ...(व्यवधान)...

DR. SYED NASIR HUSSAIN: *

श्री उपसभापति: आपका सवाल मैं बता रहा हूँ - Monitoring of Indian students abroad post-conflict escalations, आपका सवाल यह है। आप इसमें दूसरी बात न पूछें।

SHRI S. JAISHANKAR: Sir, there was no supplementary asked relevant to the question. However, the hon. Member, as is apparently a party attitude, keeps uttering * .in the House. ...(Interruptions)... The hon. Prime Minister did not campaign for anybody. ...(Interruptions)... So, this is not the first time that this party takes this position. ...(Interruptions)... I urge him to withdraw this. ...(Interruptions)...

श्री उपसभापति: प्रमोद जी, आप जानते हैं कि Rule 238 के तहत किसी भी constitutional post पर बैठे हुए व्यक्ति के बारे में ऐसे allegation लगाने से पहले आपको माननीय चेयरमैन से परमिशन लेनी पड़ेगी। ...(व्यवधान)... It will not go on record. ...(Interruptions)... I have already told you. ...(Interruptions)...No, this will not go on record. ...(Interruptions)...अगर सेकंड सप्लीमेंटरी आप इस सवाल से जुड़ी हुई पूछेंगे, तो मैं allow करूँगा। Please, please take your

* Not recorded

seat Shaktisinhji. Please ask your second supplementary. ...*(Interruptions)*...Shri Shaktisinh Gohilji, please take your seat. नासिर हुसैन जी, आपका सेकंड सप्लीमेंटरी सवाल से जुड़ा हुआ होना चाहिए। ...*(व्यवधान)*... प्लीज़, प्लीज़। ...*(व्यवधान)*... जो आपका प्रश्न है, आप उसी से जुड़ा सेकंड सवाल पूछें, मैं उसी की इजाजत दूँगा। ...*(व्यवधान)*..

DR. SYED NASEER HUSSAIN: Sir, the External Affairs Minister cannot use unparliamentary words on the record. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It will not go on record. Please put your question. ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. SYED NASEER HUSSAIN: Yes, Sir, I am putting my second supplementary. ...*(Interruptions)*... My second question is, has the Ministry engaged with foreign Governments to ensure the protection of Indian students from discrimination or targeted violence in conflict-affected regions? Do they have real-time data? What is the plan for their evacuation? Especially in the context of UN issues, they should have a plan. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Your question is over. Hon. Minister.

SHRI S. JAISHANKAR: Sir, the Government carefully monitors the number of students in all foreign countries. We also carefully monitor their welfare. Wherever there is a situation of tension or a likelihood of violence, we alert the students, as we have done in the Ukraine. Where there is a requirement for us to take further steps, such as running flights for their rescue or taking any other necessary action, we are prepared. We always have contingency plans.

DR. FAUZIA KHAN: Sir, I would request the hon. Minister to kindly clarify the Indian Government's official position on this issue and outline the interventions planned to protect the affected Indian students regarding safeguards in relation to their academic progress, financial investments and future prospects. How is the Government going to plan for this? Also, I would like to ask the External Affairs Minister: considering President Trump's statement on the Gaza Strip today regarding its occupation, what is India's stand on this? The entire world has retaliated; what is India's response?

SHRI S. JAI. SHANKAR: Sir, so far as first supplementary is concerned; yes, we take several measures. For example, my own answer has given in detail what we did in the

case of Ukraine. We allowed students to transfer to third countries. We permitted them, in many cases, to attend classes online, depending on their concerns. We also allowed them to complete their practicals in India, as an exception to the rules. Depending on the situation, we have been very sympathetic and responsive. All Embassies and Ambassadors have been instructed to take a special interest in the welfare of students, whenever a situation arises. Another example, as mentioned in my answer, is that of Israel. At the time of the Hamas attack, there were approximately 900 students. We evacuated many of them, and many have since returned. The numbers have grown. Sir, I want to assure the hon. Member that the welfare of students is very close to the Government's heart. Every Embassy is proactive in this regard. Regarding the second supplementary, Sir, it is unrelated to the question.

DR. M. THAMBIDURAI: Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, we know that many of our Indian students, who want to pursue medical education, go abroad. Since we are facing a crisis, they need to be rehabilitated. In this regard, the hon. Minister has mentioned that the National Medical Commission has no objection to transferring these students to Indian universities, provided they pass the examination here. I am thankful to the hon. Prime Minister, who has announced that 75,000 additional medical seats will be created in India. To illustrate, during Edappadi Palanisamy's tenure, 23 medical colleges were closed. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please be brief and put your question. ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. M. THAMBIDURAI: With the Central Government's help, 11 colleges were opened. However, the number of seats needs to be increased as new colleges come up. My question is, has the External Affairs Minister persuaded the NMC to increase the intake of medical colleges? Only then can the examination be conducted. This is what I want to know.

SHRI S. JAI. SHANKAR: Sir, the supplementary does not directly pertain to my Ministry. My understanding is that the number of medical colleges in the country has roughly doubled in the last 10 years. So, there are many more opportunities for students. We understand that there are many more aspirants. But where my Ministry is concerned, those students who do go abroad for education, it is our duty, it is our

obligation to look after their welfare, and I would like to assure the hon. Member, through you, that we are very much cognizant and sincere about it.

SHRI SANDOSH KUMAR P: Indian students are there in almost all parts of the world, be it Germany or Canada. So, do we have any idea of the exact number of students who are studying abroad? And, what about the quality of these universities, where Indian students are studying?

SHRI S. JAI. SHANKAR: Sir, I would like to inform the hon. Member, through you, that we have a rough idea of the number of students because we encourage them to register. But, all students do not necessarily do that. They are roughly in excess of about 10 lakhs. In terms of the quality of universities, what many Embassies do is, on their websites, they put up advisories. If there are some countries where there were cases of fraudulent admission, we issue cautions on the websites for the students who are planning to go to any country. They will naturally go to the website and check up, and they will be suitably warned. It is a very legitimate concern, which the hon. Member has raised. Students today need to be aware which are the good universities, which are not, which are the universities which have some negative issues in the past and our websites try to address that.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Question No. 33.