

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-2949
ANSWERED ON- 13.08.2026

PLIGHT OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN GULF COUNTRIES

2949. SHRI RAJEEV KUMAR

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that 9 million Indians work in the Gulf countries in physically challenging and deadly conditions, facing wage theft and debt crisis;
- (b) how many deaths of Indian workers have been reported in Gulf countries during the last five years, year-wise;
- (c) whether the Kafala sponsorship system is still in operation in Gulf countries;
- (d) whether any firm steps have been taken to ensure that the rights of Indian migrant workers are not trampled on due to the Kafala system; and
- (e) whether the Ministry would use its influence to improve the working conditions of migrant labourers?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (e) Approximately 10 million Indian nationals reside in the Gulf countries [UAE (4.5 mn), Saudi Arabia (2.7 mn), Oman (0.67 mn), Bahrain (0.31 mn), Qatar (0.82 mn), Kuwait (1 mn)]. As per information available on eMigrate portal of the Ministry of External Affairs, over the 2014-2026 (June 2026) period, a total of 50,25,506 emigrant workers holding Emigration Check Required (ECR) category passports have been granted Emigration Clearance (EC) for overseas employment in the six Gulf countries.

The number of complaints received from Indian workers in the Gulf countries regarding various types of labour issues and the number of such complaints successfully resolved over the 2021-25 period is attached at **Annexure – A**.

Data of death of Indian workers in the Gulf countries over the 2021-25 period is attached at **Annexure-B**.

Majority of the Gulf countries have brought reform in their system for hiring of workers by bringing changes in the Kafala system and introducing contract based hiring model.

Government of India has taken concrete steps to address the grievances of Indian workers abroad. Established channels have been set up to enable them to reach out to the concerned Indian Mission/Post for assistance, including walk-in appointments, email, multilingual 24x7 emergency numbers, WhatsApp numbers, grievance redressal portal like MADAD/CPGRAMS/eMigrate, and social media channels. Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendras have been set up in 3 locations in the Gulf, namely, Dubai, Jeddah, and Riyadh, to provide guidance and counselling to Indian workers. Indian Missions/Posts in the region regularly organize Open Houses and Consular Camps in different cities to extend consular services and address any grievances. Dedicated Labour Wings in the Indian Missions/Posts in most of the Gulf countries pro-actively take up grievances of emigrant workers with the concerned employers, inspect the work place of the aggrieved worker and also take up, where required, with the local Labour Department and other host country authorities. The Indian Missions/Posts also utilize the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) to provide financial and legal assistance to Indian nationals in distress abroad on a means-tested basis. Under ICWF, support such as arranging boarding & lodging, air passage to India, legal assistance and emergency medical care is rendered to Indian nationals.

Special provision has been made for the protection and welfare of Indian women workers. Women workers holding ECR passports and emigrating to ECR countries to pursue any jobs other than nursing must be at least 30 years of age. Recruitment can only be through State-run RAs or directly by a foreign employer (FE) that is registered with the concerned Indian Mission/Post. An FE hiring women workers is required to deposit a financial guarantee of US\$ 2,500/- with the concerned Indian Mission/Post abroad and the contract between the worker and

the employer must be duly attested by the Indian Mission. 7 One Stop Centres have been established in the Gulf (in Manama, Muscat, Doha, Riyadh, Dubai, Jeddah and Kuwait) especially to provide timely, comprehensive and coordinated assistance to Indian women in distress. These One Stop Centres have dedicated helplines, facilitate access to medical and police assistance, extend legal aid and counselling and provide psycho-social support.

To further safeguard the interests of Indian emigrant workers, the Government-backed Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY) is available to all Indian emigrant workers and is mandatory for all ECR category workers going to ECR countries. The scheme provides insurance cover of INR 10 Lakhs in case of accidental death or permanent disability due to accident at the workplace and offers other benefits at a nominal insurance premium of INR 275/- for two years or INR 375/- for three years coverage.

With a view to promoting safe and legal migration while ensuring welfare and safety and preventing exploitation of Indians abroad, including Indian workers, Government has signed Labour and Manpower Cooperation Agreements with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates) and Jordan. Further, to safeguard the specific interests of domestic workers in the GCC countries, Agreements on Labour Cooperation for Domestic Sector Workers (DSWs) have been signed with Saudi Arabia, UAE and Kuwait.

Sl. No.	Name of the Country	Name of the Mission/ Post	Number of complaints received/resolved									
			Complaints received	Complaints resolved	Complaints received	Complaints resolved	Complaints received	Complaints resolved	Complaints received	Complaints resolved	Complaints received	Complaints resolved
			2021	2021	2022	2022	2023	2023	2024	2024	2025	2025
1	Bahrain	EOI, Bahrain	335	327	612	579	711	649	603	594	345	341
2	Kuwait	EOI, Kuwait	4339	2910	5660	3820	7820	4517	3728	2055	4081	2608
3	Oman	EOI, Muscat	1401	1391	2478	1927	4281	4111	3114	3035	2345	2241
4	Qatar	EOI, Doha	1551	1552	436	568	139	121	162	334	135	257
5	Saudi Arabia	EOI, Riyadh	1128	1122	1989	1983	2329	2300	2246	2022	2218	1680
6	Saudi Arabia	CGI, Jeddah	650	650	456	456	798	798	630	615	679	665
7	UAE	EoI, Abu Dhabi	902	902	907	907	651	651	417	417	433	433
8	UAE	CGI, Dubai	2303	2046	2859	2798	3383	2998	3265	3126	3948	3530

Annexure – B

Sl. No.	Name of the Country	Name of the Mission/Post	Number of Indian workers who died in Gulf countires				
			2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
1	Bahrain	EOI, Bahrain	342	210	250	226	178
2	Kuwait	EO, Kuwait	1138	676	663	699	714
3	Oman	EOI, Muscat	913	452	377	329	386
4	Qatar	EOI, Doha	380	318	294	269	287
5	Saudi Arabia	EOI, Riyadh	1500	1177	1300	1223	1215
		CGI, Jeddah	753	896	1273	1286	1318
6	United Arab Emirates	EOI, Abu Dhabi	466	458	446	551	644
		CGI, Dubai	2248	1750	1687	2020	2110
