

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-348
ANSWERED ON- 03/02/2023

INDIAN WORKERS STUCK ABROAD

348. SHRI JAGDAMBIKA PAL

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state :-

- (a) the number of Indians living abroad who got stuck and had sought help from the Indian Government during the last three years;
- (b) the details of the initiatives started by the Government for the workers living abroad in need of emergency help;
- (c) whether the number of people going to gulf countries for work has increased during the last five years, if so, the details thereof, year-wise;
- (d) whether the Government regulate the agents or the institutions which take the responsibility of providing jobs to Indians in foreign countries; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN)

(a) Indians living abroad who got stuck in foreign countries during the last three years for various reasons such as COVID-19 induced flight restrictions and conflicts in Afghanistan and Ukraine. Government of India successfully facilitated travel of 3.2 crore people (with inbound and outbound) under Vande Bharat Mission including Air Bubble arrangements; 18,278 under operation Ganga from Ukraine; and 669 people from Afghanistan under Operation Devi Shakti.

(b) The Government has taken several steps to safeguard the interests of Indian emigrants. These include:

Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF): Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) has been set up in all Indian Missions and Posts abroad to assist Overseas Indian nationals in times of distress and emergency. Fund is used to provide legal assistance, Boarding & Lodging assistance, Emergency medical care, air passage to stranded Indians and transportation of mortal remains of Indian nationals.

Labor and Manpower Cooperation MOUs/Agreements that provide the overarching framework for cooperation on labour and manpower related issues are in place with the Gulf

Cooperation Council countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates) and Jordan. These MOUs and Agreements have provision of implementation through Joint Working Groups. Further, to safeguard the specific interest of domestic workers in GCC Countries, agreements on Labor Cooperation for Domestic Sector have been signed with Saudi Arabia, UAE and Kuwait.

Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana: Government has been effectively implementing Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY) as a mandatory insurance scheme for all Emigration Check Required (ECR) category workers going to ECR countries. The scheme provides an insurance cover of 10 Lakhs in case of accidental death or permanent disability and other benefits.

In addition, there are various other mechanisms in place for the welfare and protection of Indian nationals abroad like MADAD, eMigrate portal, Pravasi Bhartiya Sahayata Kendra (PBSK), etc. Dedicated Labour / Community Welfare wings have been established in Indian Missions and Posts in the countries with large number of Indian workers. Missions have also established 24x7 Helplines and Toll Free Helplines for the benefit of Indian workers to seek help.

(c) The year-wise numbers of Indian workers going to the Gulf countries during past five years, as per data available with the eMigrate portal is enclosed as **Annexure A**.

(d & e) Recruitment for overseas employment is regulated as per the provisions of Emigration Act, 1983. All Recruitment Agencies dealing with recruitment of Indian workers having Emigration Check Required (ECR) Passport for overseas employment in 18 ECR category countries need mandatory registration with Ministry of External Affairs.

ANNEXURE A

The year-wise number of Indian workers going to the Gulf Countries during last five years as per e-Migrate Portal

Sl. No.	Countries	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1	KSA	72399	161103	44316	32845	178630
2	UAE	112059	76112	17891	10844	33233
3	Kuwait	57613	45712	8107	10158	71432
4	Qatar	34471	31810	8907	49579	30871
5	Oman	36037	28392	7206	19452	31994
6	Bahrain	9142	9997	4175	6382	10232
	Total	321721	353126	90602	129260	356392
