

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-4105
ANSWERED ON- 24/03/2023

REDRESS GRIEVANCES OF INDIAN CITIZEN

4105. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN

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

- (a) whether the Government proposes to constitute a special cell in middle east for redressal of the grievances of Indian Citizens working there, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether it has come to the notice of the Government that hundreds of Indian Citizens lost their employment due to Covid-19 and they left their place of employment abroad without availing their service benefits to which they are legally entitled;
- (c) if so, the action taken to provide such legal claims to the Indian citizens;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to conduct a meeting at diplomatic level to settle the claims, if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the Government proposes to establish a rehabilitation programme for the NRI's who lost their employment abroad due to Covid-19; and
- (f) if so, the details of the action taken thereon?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN)

(a to f) The Government accords highest priority to resolve issues pertaining to Indian migrant workers. Our Missions and Posts abroad remain always vigilant and actively monitor and follow up grievance of any nature received from the Indian citizens in foreign countries. Grievances are also responded through various channels including walk-ins, e-mails, social media, 24x7 Helplines and Open Houses etc. To enable the diaspora to register their grievances online, the Government has established portals such as MADAD and e-Migrate. Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendras (PBSK) have been set up in **Dubai** (UAE), **Riyadh, Jeddah** (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and **Kuala Lumpur** (Malaysia) to provide guidance and counseling on all matters pertaining to overseas Indian workers.

During the pandemic, it was the Government's priority to ensure that its impact on Indian workers in terms of loss of employment was mitigated. To that end, the Ministry and all our Missions especially in the Gulf region were continuously engaged with respective local Governments to maintain the workers, ensure their welfare and facilitate financial payments due to them. Government to Government interactions, including at the level of the Prime Minister, helped the Government of India to mitigate devastating impact of the pandemic on Indian migrant workers.

As soon as pandemic started to recede, Government's focus was shifted on pressing for return of workers and families on an expeditious basis. These issues have been taken up by the Government with its Gulf counterparts at the highest levels and various diplomatic endeavours led by the EAM and MoS(VM) to the GCC countries. Identified countries, including the GCC countries, were pressed to establish air bubbles and ease visa and travel restrictions. As a result, there has been a steady flow of returnees back especially to the Gulf region.

Number of Emigration Clearances (EC) granted during last 3 years to Indian nationals holding ECR category passports traveling to 18 ECR countries as per following data from the eMigrate portal, reflects that growing number of migrants workers (including those who lost their jobs during the pandemic) are getting employment opportunities abroad post-pandemic :

Year	2020	2021	2022
Number of EC issued	94145	132673	373434

As per data available on Madad and eMigrate portal, 26730 grievances, which includes matters related to compensation and residual payments, were registered by Indian citizens on Madad portal during the last three years. During this period 29640 grievances were resolved (this includes some of the grievances registered in previous years).

Missions and Posts abroad take up grievances so received with the host governments for action on priority basis. If the issue pertains to the State Governments in India, then it is taken up with them for resolution. Financial and legal assistance to distressed Indians, if necessary, is provided through the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF). These issues are also raised during bilateral meetings with the concerned countries, at appropriate level including at relevant Joint Working Groups (JWGs).

Wherever required, such cases are taken up by respective Indian Missions/Posts with concerned employers/companies. Indian Missions and Posts also facilitated discussions between Indian workers and their employers to settle the issues by providing all possible help. Such issues are also taken up with the Governments of host countries during high level bilateral meetings. Besides, some countries have also instituted welfare support measures for workers including expatriate workers. Many such cases have been resolved through these processes.

The Government of India launched the Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support (SWADES) portal as a joint initiative of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE), the Ministry of Civil Aviation, and the MEA, aimed to create a database of returning citizens based on their skill sets and experience, who lost their jobs and were stuck overseas and have returned back to India through the Vande Bharat Mission. Further, for reintegration of Non-Resident Indians within India, a number of initiatives were introduced at both the Central and State government level. The Central Government launched various schemes that also benefitted the migrants. In addition, various State Governments have started the exercise of skill mapping and matching for returnee migrant workers.
