

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 3536

ANSWERED ON - 21/03/2025

FREE TRANSPORT OF MORTAL REMAINS OF NRIS

3536 SHRI SHAFI PARAMBIL

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

(a) the details of the existing procedure for transporting the mortal remains of Indians who have died in a foreign country;

(b) whether there is any request that the dead bodies of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) be sent to India free of cost; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by the Government to support the families of the deceased in transporting the mortal remains to India?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) to (c) The Ministry has a well-established mechanism/SOPs to coordinate with all Missions / Posts abroad to provide help to Indian nationals abroad in distress including in cases of deaths, local cremation/burial or transportation of mortal remains to their hometowns in India and settlement of insurance / compensation claims.

Transportation of mortal remains of Indians who die abroad, involves completion of certain formalities before the local authorities allow such body/bodies to be transported to India. In case the death is unnatural, police investigations are to be completed. There exists a singly window clearance in all Indian Missions/Posts for such cases.

As soon as the information about the death of an Indian national comes to the knowledge of the concerned Indian Mission/Post abroad, they take proactive action by seeking a report from the local Foreign Office and other concerned authorities regarding the cause of the death of the Indian national. Our Missions/Posts abroad inform the next of kin of the deceased Indian national, and facilitate the transportation to India or local burial of mortal remains in accordance with the wishes of the family of the deceased.

Transportation of mortal remains of Indians involves the following steps:

- i. The family has to nominate a person on their behalf to carry out all the formalities in foreign country, if they are unable to come to the foreign country to take over the mortal remain.**
- ii. The Authorized person/ Employer/University Authority has to inform the Insurance Company (if any).**
- iii. The Authorized person/ Employer/University Authority has to nominate a Transporter (in consultation with Insurance Company, if any).**
- iv. A copy of the FIR has to be obtained from the Police authorities, if applicable.**
- v. The Transporter has to complete the formalities of Embalming, Encoffining & Quarantine of the mortal remains as soon as possible.**
- vi. The Authorized person/ Employer/University Authority/ Transporter has to book an Air Ticket to India for transportation of mortal remains.**

- vii. The authorized person needs to obtain the documents (FIR, if any, Medical Certificate/ Death Certificate, Original Passport, Embalming Certificate, Encoffining Certificate, Quarantine Certificate, Authority Letter by the family, List of belongings, Air Way Bill (copy or detail information) and provide to Embassy/ Consulate for Cancellation of passport of the deceased and issue of “Death Certificate and NOC”.**

- viii. The family also needs to authorize a person to collect the mortal remains at the Indian Airport on their behalf, if required.**

For transportation of mortal remains, Indian Missions/ Posts needs liaising with different authorities in the foreign country, viz., on the following aspects:

- i. Medical report / death certificate issued from the hospital concerned;**

- ii. Police report (with English translation, if report is in some other language), in case of accidental or unnatural death;**

- iii. Consent letter from the next of kin of the deceased for local cremation / burial / transportation of mortal remains;**

- iv. Issuing of No Objection Certificate (NOC) by the Mission / Post for transportation or local cremation / burial as required;**
- v. Clearance and arrangements for embalming of mortal remains from the authorities concerned in the foreign country;**
- vi. Clearance from local immigration/ customs department.**

These procedures differ from country to country depending on the regulations in the specific country. Therefore, no fixed time can be framed for eventual transportation of the mortal remains. Generally, the transportation of mortal remains is quicker in cases of natural deaths in comparison to the cases of unnatural deaths.

In normal circumstances, such cases are invariably processed between 3 to 14 days in cases of natural deaths. Generally, delays occur in cases of unnatural deaths where legal and police investigations have to be completed by the local authorities. Delays also occur in cases where the nationality or identity of the deceased needs to be established. In some cases, DNA profiling has also been undertaken to confirm the identity of the deceased. In very few cases, the family of deceased is untraceable or unwilling to provide consent

for transportation of mortal remains or local burial / cremation leading to delays.

The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) is set up in Indian Missions & Posts abroad for assisting NRIs in times of distress and emergency in the 'most deserving cases' on a 'means tested basis'. The support extended under ICWF also includes financial assistance for Transportation of Mortal Remains.
