

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 4722

ANSWERED ON- 28/03/2025

PROTECTION OF NON-ECR PASSPORT HOLDERS

4722. DR. SHASHI THAROOR

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

- (a) whether the Government has recent data on the migration pattern of Non-ECR (Emigration Check Required) passport holders;**
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;**
- (c) whether it is true that most Indian emigrants hold Non-ECR passports and thus their migration patterns remain undocumented;**
- (d) if so, the details thereof;**
- (e) whether the Government is taking any measures to regulate and monitor the migration patterns of non-ECR passport holders, thereby ensuring their well-being; and**
- (f) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?**

ANSWER

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

(a) to (d) Data of all Indians travelling abroad is captured by the Bureau of Immigration at exit point. Insofar as travel to 18 Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries are concerned, a record is kept of migrant workers. No separate record is maintained of migrants to non-ECR

countries. The majority of travellers exiting India do so on non-ECR passports. Establishing migration patterns for them is not feasible.

The e-Migrate portal is the mechanism to record the travel of migrant workers to ECR nations. The e-Migrate portal is operational since its launch in year 2015 and provides for registration of Recruitment Agents (RAs), Foreign Employers (FEs) and issue of Emigration Clearance (EC) to prospective emigrants. It is a comprehensive online system developed to facilitate safe and legal migration of Indian workers to 18 ECR countries. The initiative was conceptualized to make the emigration process transparent and also to address various complaints.

(e) and (f) The Government accords highest priority to the safety, security and well-being of Indian nationals including Indian emigrant workers abroad, whether of ECR or ECNR categories. In pursuance of this goal, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has entered into Migration and Mobility Partnerships which are aimed at fostering mobility, expanding work opportunities and promoting welfare of emigrant Indian nationals and have already been signed with France (2018), UK (2021), Germany (2022), Italy, Australia, Austria (2023) and Denmark (2024). Discussions with other countries on similar agreements are underway especially with those in Europe and the Far East. Agreements have also been signed with Israel and Mauritius for recruitment of Indian workers while ensuring their protection and welfare. The agreements also provide for regular and structured consultative mechanisms for discussing, inter-alia, issues related to welfare of Indian workers and professionals abroad.

The Government has also entered into bilateral Social Security Agreements (SSA) with other countries in order to protect the interests of Indian

professionals / skilled workers working abroad for short durations. SSA provides exemption from making double social security contributions. As on date, India has signed and operationalized Social Security Agreements (SSAs) with 19 countries - Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, South Korea and Brazil. India has also signed Social Security Agreements with Argentina and Poland which are in the process of getting operationalized. India has also signed SSA with the Quebec Province of Canada.

Additionally, India is also actively participating in the various international/regional/multilateral fora and platforms on international migration such as the International Migration Review Forum, Colombo Process, Abu Dhabi Dialogue, Budapest Process, the International Dialogue on Migration, Global Compact for Migration regional reviews which involves sharing of best practices and discussions on critical areas aimed at facilitating safe and regular labour migration. Last year, India also assumed the chair of the Colombo Process.

The Government of India is also committed to skilling and capacity building of its emigrants workers. In this context, the Government has been implementing its flagship scheme Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana(PMKVY) since 2015 to impart skill development training through Short-Term Training (STT) and upskilling and re-skilling through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to youth across the country. Through PMKVY, individuals can avail themselves of placement opportunities, both domestic and overseas, based on their acquired skills and certifications.

Additionally, the Government implements the Pre-departure Orientation Training (PDOT) for aspiring emigrant workers to equip them with essential information on the cultural, legal and occupational aspects of the destination countries. This training ensures that Indian workers are better prepared for their overseas employment, thereby promoting their safety, welfare and integration abroad.

For registering and redressal of grievances, the Government has established various mechanisms. Indian emigrants workers can contact the Missions/Posts through various channels like walk-in, email, multilingual 24x7 emergency numbers, grievance redressal portals like MADAD, CPGRAMS, eMigrate, social media, toll free helplines, whatsapp numbers and Missions/Posts have also launched mobile Apps to enable Indian nationals contact respective Indian Missions/Posts when in distress or in emergency situation. Consular camps and Open Houses are also held by Indian Missions/Posts to reach out to the Indian nationals abroad who might need any assistance/guidance from the Government.

Our Missions/Posts abroad also utilize the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) to provide the following services/assistance to the Indian diaspora in distress on a means tested basis:

- (i) Transportation of mortal remains to India or cremation with the consent of the family;**
- (ii) Emergency medical care;**
- (iii) Legal assistance;**
- (iv) Boarding and lodging; and**
- (v) Air passage for stranded Indians.**
