

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 844

ANSWERED ON- 07/02/2025

COMPLAINTS FROM MIGRANT LABOURERS IN GCC COUNTRIES

844 DR. SHASHI THAROOR

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the total number of Indian migrants worldwide;**
- (b) the percentage of such migrants in each Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) country and overall in GCC countries;**
- (c) the percentage of migrants from Kerala among Indian migrants residing in GCC countries;**
- (d) the number of labour complaints received from Indian migrant workers residing in GCC countries during the last ten years, year-wise;**
- (e) whether India is indeed the largest migrant-sending and remittance-receiving country across the globe; and**
- (f) if so, the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to address the labour complaints received from Indian migrant workers residing in GCC countries and other nations?**

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) to (d) As per available data, there are around 15 million Indian nationals abroad including unskilled workers, skilled workers and professionals. A large number of skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled workers from India are employed in various sectors in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries. As per the latest information available with our Missions/Posts in the GCC countries, the estimated number of Indians residing in these countries is as follows:

Sr. No.	Country	Estimated number of Indians
1.	United Arab Emirates	38,90,953
2.	Saudi Arabia	26,45,302
3.	Kuwait	10,07,961
4.	Qatar	8,30,491
5.	Oman	6,64,783
6.	Bahrain	3,32,289
	Total	93,71,779

This Ministry maintains the data in respect of Indian workers, holding Emigration Check Required (ECR) passports, proceeding for overseas employment through e-Migrate portal to any of the 18 ECR countries. Details of

the Emigration Clearances (ECs) issued to Indian workers who migrated for overseas employment to GCC countries during last four years through eMigrate portal are as follows:

Year	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Number of ECs issued for GCC countries	129262	356383	380008	375418
Number of ECs issued to emigrants from Kerala for GCC countries	10549	16183	18168	16524
Percentage of ECs issued to emigrants from Kerala to GCC countries (in %)	8.16	4.54	4.78	4.40

Those who did not obtain Emigration Clearances are, however, not reflected in the data. The year-wise number of complaints/grievances received by Indian Missions/Posts in the GCC countries is given below:

Year	Saudi Arabia	UAE	Kuwait	Qatar	Oman	Bahrain
2015	1989	2008	3986	1130	969	693
2016	7310	2368	4187	1162	2199	783
2017	4346	3756	4481	1385	3009	895
2018	8218	2153	3287	522	3232	466
2019	4856	2888	5286	393	2606	597
2020	3437	2547	3965	370	1116	627

2021	2992	2727	4339	475	933	355
2022	5129	3206	5660	525	1448	638
2023	4881	3456	7820	455	3037	737
2024	2497	3717	3728	179	1991	627

(e) to (f) The Indian diaspora is one of the largest migrant communities in the world. According to World Bank Migration and Development Brief 2023, India was the top recipient of remittances in the world for the year 2023.

The Government accords highest priority to the safety, security and well-being of Indian nationals abroad and has taken several initiatives such as Pravasi Bhartiya Bima Yojna (PBBY) and Pre-Departure Orientation & Training (PDOT) in ensuring that Indian migrant workers (including labourers) undertake safe migration, have decent working and living conditions in destination countries, are aware of their rights and have access to various welfare schemes of the Government. The Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY) is a mandatory insurance scheme aimed at safeguarding the interests of ECR category Indian migrant workers going for employment to 18 ECR countries. The scheme provides an insurance cover of INR. 10 lakh and other benefits in case of accidental death or permanent disability leading to job loss, at a nominal insurance premium of INR 275/- for two years or INR 375/- for three years validity. PDOT is a one-day training programme on soft skills imparted by

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in collaboration with National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), State Governments and other stake holders.

Our Missions/Posts abroad also utilize the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) to provide necessary assistance, including legal, on means tested basis to Indian citizens abroad and their dependents in times of distress including in the process of transportation of mortal remains to India or local cremation with the consent of the family and settlement of death claims. Since year 2014 until March 2024, around Rs.656/- crores has been utilized by Indian Missions/Posts abroad under the Fund and around 3,50,194 Indians were extended assistance.

The Government has established various mechanisms to enable Indian workers abroad to reach out in case they need any assistance. The workers can contact the Missions/Posts through various channels like walk-in, email, multilingual 24x7 emergency numbers, grievance redressal portal like MADAD, CPGRAMS, and eMigrate, and social media etc. Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendras (PBSK) have been set up in New Delhi and at Dubai (UAE), Riyadh & Jeddah (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) to provide assistance, guidance and counselling to Indian workers in distress.

Indian Missions/Posts abroad have also established 24X7 Helplines including Toll Free Helplines, whatsapp numbers and have launched mobile Apps to

enable Indian nationals contact respective Indian Missions/Posts when in distress or in emergency situation.

Missions/Posts in Gulf Countries also have dedicated labour wings which ensure redressal of labour grievances. Shelter homes for distressed Indian nationals have been set up in countries having sizeable presence of Indians such as Bahrain, Kuwait, Malaysia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE. These shelter homes provide free boarding and lodging to Indian nationals in distress pending their repatriation back to India.

On receiving complaint from migrant workers against the Foreign Employers(FE), the concerned Indian Mission/Post takes up the matter with the employer/local authorities. On finding any FE at fault, they are placed under Prior Approval Category (PAC) and further employment of Indian workers through that particular FE is allowed only after due consultation with the concerned Indian Mission/Post. Issues relating to FEs are also raised in the periodic meetings of the Joint Working Group held under the aegis of Memorandum of Understandings signed with various countries.

Indian Missions/Posts also regularly organize Open House and Consular camps in remote areas to interact and get feedback from the Indian workers abroad and address their grievances.
