

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 2193

ANSWERED ON – 01/08/2025

**REPATRIATION AND WELFARE OF INDIAN WORKERS STRANDED IN
SAUDI ARABIA**

2193. SHRI SAPTAGIRI SANKAR ULAKA

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of Indian labourers currently stranded in Saudi Arabia due to unpaid wages or loss of legal status, if so, the details of estimated number of such workers, State-wise and sector-wise;

(b) the immediate relief measures, food, shelter, medical aid and legal assistance, extended by the Indian Embassy and Consulates and the timeline fixed for clearing unpaid dues and securing exit permits;

(c) the arrangements made for emergency travel documents and cost-sharing with Saudi employers to expedite repatriation and the progress achieved to date; and

(d) the long-term steps being taken to curb similar incidents, including stricter regulation of recruiting agents, compulsory insurance and enhanced pre-departure orientation for workers bound for Saudi Arabia?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) to (c) The Indian Embassy/Consulate in Saudi Arabia, from time to time, receive complaints from Indian workers facing issues related to non-payment of wages, confiscation of passports, loss of legal status due to non-issuance/renewal of residence card, exit permits not processed by the sponsor/employer, etc.

There are established channels to enable them to reach out to the Embassy/Consulate in case they need any assistance. They can contact the Embassy/Consulate through walk-in, email, multilingual 24x7 emergency numbers, Whatsapp number, grievance redressal portal like MADAD/CPGAMS/eMigrate, and social media etc. There are dedicated Labour Wings for handling such matters. Pravasi

Bharatiya Sahayata Kendra has been set up in Riyadh and Jeddah to provide guidance and counselling to the Indian workers. The Embassy/Consulate also organises Consular Camps in remote areas.

On receipt of any complaint or grievance from Indian nationals including labourers, the Embassy/Consulate pro-actively takes it up with the concerned Foreign Employer (FE) and, if needed, the work place of the aggrieved worker is also visited. The issues are also taken up with the local Labour Department and other concerned authority of the host country for redressal.

The Embassy/Consulate also utilizes the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) from time to time to provide financial and legal assistance to Indian nationals in distress on a means-tested basis. Under ICWF, the major assistance includes Boarding & Lodging, Air Passage to India, Legal Assistance, Emergency Medical Care, Transportation of Mortal Remains to India, and Payment of Small Fines and Penalties.

(d) The Government has taken several initiatives like the Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY) and Pre-departure Orientation

Training (P-DOT) in ensuring that Indian migrant workers 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.

PBBY is a mandatory insurance scheme aimed at safeguarding the interests of Indian migrant workers holding Emigration Check Required (ECR) passports, going for employment to 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.
