

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-4052
ANSWERED ON- 24/03/2023

EMIGRATION ACT

4052. SHRI GAURAV GOGOI

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

- (a) whether the Ministry of External Affairs proposes to expedite the passage of the long-pending Emigration Act and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the list of issues faced by Indian migrant workers that were deliberated in the 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) meeting held in Madhya Pradesh; and
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to compensate the Indian migrants who are subjected to wage theft in foreign countries?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN)

(a) The government is conscious of the imperative need for putting in place an enabling framework to address migration related issues. Towards this end, the Ministry of External Affairs is preparing a draft Emigration Bill after extensive consultations with all concerned stakeholders.

The draft bill will cover various aspects of the migration cycle and empowers work force to avail employment opportunities abroad. It puts in place an enabling institutional framework that is responsive, transparent and technology driven.

(b) Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Conventions are organised to recognise and celebrate the achievements of the Overseas Indian community and their contribution to the development of India. The 17th PBD Convention had the following five thematic Plenary sessions chaired at Ministerial-level, featuring panel discussions involving eminent diaspora experts:

(I) Role of Diaspora Youth in Innovation and New Technologies.

(II) Role of Indian Diaspora in promoting Indian Healthcare Eco-system in Amrit Kaal: Vision @2047.

(III) Plenary Session III: Leveraging the Soft Power of India- Goodwill through Craft, Cuisine & Creativity.

(IV) Enabling global mobility of Indian workforce – Role of Indian Diaspora.

(V) Harnessing the potential of diaspora entrepreneurs particularly women towards an inclusive approach to nation building.

(c) As per data available on Madad and e-Migrate Portals from 2020-2023, 26730 grievances, which includes matters related to compensation, wage theft 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).

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

The Government has also taken several other steps to safeguard the interests of Indian migrant workers. These include:

Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF): This has been set up in all Indian Missions and Posts abroad to assist Overseas Indian nationals in times of distress and emergency. Fund is used to provide legal assistance, Boarding & Lodging assistance, Emergency medical care, air passage to stranded Indians and transportation of mortal remains of Indian nationals.

Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana: Government has been effectively implementing Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY) as a mandatory insurance scheme for all Emigration Check Required (ECR) category workers going to ECR countries. The scheme provides an insurance cover of INR 10 Lakhs in case of accidental death or permanent disability and other benefits.

In addition, there are various other mechanisms in place for the welfare and protection of Indian nationals abroad like MADAD, eMigrate portal, Pravasi Bhartiya Sahayata Kendra (PBSK), etc. Dedicated Labour / Community Welfare wings have been established in Indian Missions and Posts in the countries with large number of Indian workers. Missions have also established 24x7 Helplines and Toll Free Helplines for the benefit of Indian workers to seek help.
