

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2096  
ANSWERED ON:16.03.2005  
BRINGING BACK REMAINS OF INDIANS DYING ABROAD  
Bellarmin Shri A.V.;Shivanna Shri M

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

- (a) whether there is always a delay in some of the West Asian countries like Saudi Arabia in the case of bringing back the mortal remains of the Indians dying there;
- (b) whether it also takes months to bring the `bodies` even in the case of natural deaths;
- (c) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether it has come to the notice of the Government that there are many unnatural and mysterious deaths which are not properly investigated there causing great agony and anxiety to such workers` families in India; and
- (e) if so, the effective measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a)&(b) Yes, Sir. In Saudi Arabia, in some cases, there is delay in bringing back to India the mortal remains of Indian nationals dying there. The delay varies from 4-6 weeks in cases of natural deaths, and it could take up to 16 weeks, or even more, if the death has occurred due to unnatural reasons like road or industrial accident.

However, our Missions give top priority to the expeditious disposal of bodies and/or transportation of the mortal remains to India, if desired by the next of kin. Normally, a dead body is dispatched in two to three days` time, after release from the Saudi authorities.

(c) There are many reasons for the delays, the main reason for the delay in despatch of the dead bodies is the time taken for completion of necessary formalities locally. In certain cases lack of cooperation from Sponsors of deceased also delays the dispatch of mortal remains. In case of unnatural death, the body is released by the police only after completion of necessary investigation and post mortem. Occasionally, there are also delays in receipt of instructions from the next of kin of the deceased from India regarding disposal of the body or transport to India or due to difficulty in tracing the next of kin. In Oman, with the introduction of new rules relating to the regularization of civil status, i.e. visa and labour card for all expatriates, delays have started occurring even in the case of those deceased whose labour cards and visa have expired before his death, till the accumulated dues and fines are settled with the authorities. However, this issue has been taken up officially by our Embassy for issue of the required documents as soon as possible.

(d) & (e) In case of `unnatural and mysterious deaths` arousing suspicion receipt of information about such deaths, the Missions approach the concerned Governments immediately who cause the necessary enquiries to be initiated and revert to the Missions explaining action taken on such cases.