

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:976
ANSWERED ON:16.07.2014
CONDITIONS OF WORKERS ABROAD
Owaisi Shri Asaduddin

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the difficult conditions that Indian migrant workers are subjected to in Qatar, like seizure of passport on arrival and long working hours;
- (b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to improve the conditions of the workers there or bring them back to India; and
- (c) the number of workers rescued from Gulf countries during the last three years and further efforts being made by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (GEN. RETD. V.K. SINGH)

(a) & (b) Prevailing regulations of the Government of Qatar do not permit seizure of passports of migrant workers by their employers or long working hours. Whenever such complaints are received, they are taken up promptly by our Mission in Qatar with the employers and concerned Qatari authorities. The Embassy has a fully functional Labour and Community Welfare Wing. The Government of Qatar has been supportive in resolving complaints of Indian migrant workers and in facilitating repatriation of aggrieved persons whenever such requests are made by the Mission. The Mission also conducts Open-House meetings for regular interaction with the Indian nationals. Where required, distressed Indian nationals are repatriated to India at Government cost if they are not able to meet the expenditure on cost of air tickets.

(c) In the last three years, 11,862 distressed Indian workers were assisted in returning to India from the Gulf countries. The Indian Missions and Posts in the Gulf region have helped Indian nationals in distress, provided shelter homes for distressed Indian housemaids, appointed Welfare Officers and also signed MoUs with the Foreign Governments to ensure better protection and welfare of Indian nationals. Missions/Posts in the Gulf region have established 24x7 Helplines with Toll Free telephone numbers to help Indian nationals. Whenever Indian nationals approach the Indian Missions and Posts for assistance they are always attended to promptly.