

Punjab » Community

Govt to address issues of Indian workers abroad

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Inks pact with six Gulf countries, Jordan, Malaysia; begins online programme, 24x7 helpline

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Responding to a question by Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) MP from Punjab, Prem Singh Chandumajra, the Ministry of External Affairs said today that there was no general pattern to indicate an increase in case of torture and exploitation of Indian workers abroad, especially in Middle-East countries in the past three years.

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said the Centre had been writing to all state governments to take action against fraudulent and illegal recruitment agents time after time.

Whenever a complaint is received against any unregistered recruiting agent, the same is forwarded to the state government concerned to take immediate action against unscrupulous agents under provisions of the IPC and the Emigration Act, 1984, Swaraj said.

With regards to steps taken to create awareness among workers regarding assistance available to them in times of distress, and mechanism in place with Indian foreign offices abroad to provide them support, she said the government had signed MoUs with six Gulf countries, Jordan and Malaysia.

Principles of the agreement include declaration of mutual intent to enhance employment opportunities and for bilateral cooperation in protection and welfare of workers, and the host country to take measures for protection and welfare of workers in the organised sector.

Other measures of the government include setting up of the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) in all foreign offices abroad to meet contingency expenditure incurred by them for carrying out various welfare activities for overseas Indian citizens who were in distress.

Also, the government has started an on-line programme 'Madad', which includes a helpline for lodging grievances of emigrants, which are attended to on a priority basis.

Moreover, a 24x7 helpline, 'Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC),' has been set up in Gurgaon. It provides information and guidance on all matters and problems pertaining to overseas employment of Indian nationals. The Indian Workers Resource Centre (IWRC) set up in Dubai by the Embassy of India, in the UAE, provides guidance and counselling on all matters pertaining to overseas Indian workers in the UAE.

