

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4123
ANSWERED ON:20.04.2005
DEMANDS OF NRIs
Rao Shri Sambasiva Rayapati

Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the NRIs have made a series of demands to the Government;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the demands include granting of voting rights establishing special courts for them, greater vigilance regarding the activities of recruitment agencies and protecting the interests of NRIs abroad; and
- (d) if so, the current status of these demands and the steps taken/proposed to be taken to ensure that all their demands are fulfilled?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) IN MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER)

- (a) Yes, Sir, particularly NRIs from the Gulf.
- (b) & (c) Their demands include better supervision over recruitment agencies, insurance for workers, admission of their wards in educational institutions, welfare & rehabilitation measures for workers returning to India, release of innocent victims from prisons abroad, voting rights and Budget airlines. Government is not aware of any demand to establish Special Courts for NRIs.
- (d) The following action has been initiated on some of the above demands:
 - (i) Complaints against registered recruitment agencies are examined by the Protector General of Emigrants and action is taken to suspend/cancel their registration. In the case of unregistered agencies, complaints are filed with the State Police authorities. In the last two years, 27 registrations have been suspended and 4 cancelled. 64 complaints have been filed with the Police and 20 prosecutions sanctioned.
 - (ii) A Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana Scheme has been implemented w.e.f. 25 December 2003. This scheme has since become more competitive and affordable to Gulf workers for whom it is primarily meant.
 - (iii) 1/3 of the 15% supernumerary seats in educational institutions have been earmarked for children of NRIs in Gulf and South East Asia at fees applicable to resident Indians.
 - (iv) The Government takes up the release of innocent victims from prisons whenever necessary.
 - (v) The Government of Kerala has made a proposal to grant voting rights to NRIs by including them in the electoral rolls as a special category.
 - (vi) Air India has announced the starting of their Budget airline` Air India Express` from April 29, 2005.
 - (vii) The Government of Kerala has devised several welfare schemes for the welfare of NRIs in the Gulf. The Government of India has been pursuing establishment of a welfare fund for Overseas Indian

workers as well as Central Council for Promotion of Overseas Employment.