

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.12
ANSWERED ON 20.07.2023

MIGRATION TO ECR COUNTRIES

***12. DR. L. HANUMANTHAI AH**

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) total number of people migrated to ECR (Emigration Check Required) countries through illegal agents in the last three years;
- (b) the status of the recently launched eMigrate Portal for the ECR passport holders who have migrated to ECR countries; and
- (c) the measures that Government intends to take to prevent illicit agencies from engaging in the recruitment of citizens of ECR category countries?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[DR. SUBRAMANYAM JAISHANKAR]**

(a to c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (c) IN RESPECT OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 12 FOR REPLY ON 20.07.2022 REGARDING “MIGRATION TO ECR COUNTRIES”.

The Ministry maintains record of migrant workers who migrate to 18 Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries through e-Migrate portal. The Ministry keeps receiving inputs about instances of Indian nationals holding ECR passports traveling through unlawful channels. On the basis of complaints related to such illegal recruitment activities, the concerned state police authorities are alerted to take appropriate action. Details of complaints received and forwarded to state police for action and investigation, during last four years are as under:

| Year | No. of complaints | Cases referred to state governments for action | Prosecution sanctions sought | Prosecution sanctions issued |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2020 | 166 | 166 | 7 | 7 |
| 2021 | 139 | 139 | 7 | 7 |
| 2022 | 297 | 297 | 11 | 11 |
| 2023 (upto June 2023) | 47 | 47 | 05 | 05 |

So far 2548 illegal agents have been listed on the e-Migrate portal. Ministry has also put some Foreign Employers in Pre-Approval Category (PAC) list based on complaints related to harassment, illegal recruitment, non-payment of salary etc. On the basis of such complaints received from Indian migrant workers who are duped by illegal agents / employers abroad concerned Indian Missions/Posts take up the matter with local authorities concerned to provide necessary assistance and repatriate them to India on need basis.

The eMigrate portal is fully operational since its launch in year 2015 and provides for registration of Recruitment Agents (RAs), Foreign Employers (FEs) and issue of Emigration Clearance (EC) to prospective emigrants. It is a comprehensive online system developed to facilitate safe and legal migration of Indian workers to 18 ECR countries. The initiative was conceptualized to make the emigration process transparent and also to address various complaints. At present, approximately 1000 ECs are processed daily by the 14 Protector of Emigrants offices across the country. Since its inception in 2015, a total of 40,03,592 ECs have been issued through the eMigrate portal till June 2023. There are around 2000 active RAs and around 2 lakh FEs registered in the portal.

The Government accords highest priority to the safety, security and well-being of Indian nationals abroad. Ministry has been making constant efforts to educate migrant workers about the perils of illegal channels. Following the implementation of the eMigrate system in 2015. ECR emigrants are recommended to seek overseas employment exclusively through legal channels, such as the eMigrate portal. Indian Missions abroad also play a crucial role in proactively sensitising Indian job seekers through issuing Advisories and Press Releases about ramifications of fake job offers by fraudulent and illegal channels.

This Ministry has also launched the 'Surakshit Jaaye Prasikshit Jaaye - Go Safe, Go Trained' campaign in 2018 to raise awareness and facilitate safe and legal migration. This motto has been publicized through awareness generation workshops and Pre-Departure Orientation & Training (PDOT) imparted to the prospective migrants since its launch in March 2017. The program is presently being popularized through 33 centers spread across the country. The goal is that well-informed migrant workers are able to seamlessly integrate and have a safe and productive stay abroad. Further, to underline the importance of safe, legal, orderly and skilled migration, a

commemorative postal stamp on 'Surakshit Jayein, Prasikshit Jayein' was released by the Prime Minister of India on 09.01.2023 during the PBD 2023.

The Ministry holds regular inter-ministerial consultations with BoI, MHA and outreach events with State Governments to find actionable agenda to curb the activities of illegal recruitment agents and to create awareness on safe and legal migration. In recent years, GOI has significantly reinforced the support and welfare framework to empower ECR passport holders emigrating to 18 ECR countries. The Indian Community Welfare Fund, the MADAD portal, e-Migrate system, Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendras (PBSK), Pravasi Bhartiya Bima Yojana (PBBY) etc. are some of the important mechanisms established to assist the Indian migrant workers.

It is also Government's endeavor to broad-base the location of recruitment agents and agencies so that small cities, towns, and villages also have fair opportunity. The new RA scheme, launched in December 2017, aims to provide business opportunities in the field of overseas employment to new entrepreneurs as well as those small entities already engaged in related activities such as travel consultancy, travel and tourism.
