

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.6182
TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.04.2018

FAKE RECRUITMENT AGENCIES

6182. DR. SHASHI THAROOR:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the recurring problem of Indian workers going to Saudi Arabia and other middle east countries through fake recruitment agencies;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the specific steps being taken to stop fake recruitment agencies from duping Indian workers when they seek employment in the middle east countries;
- (c) whether the Government is aware that many of the Indian workers who travel to the middle east countries in search of employment, are made to work under cruel and exploitative environments; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the specific steps being taken to curb the exploitation and torture of Indian workers in the middle east?

ANSWER

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

(a) & (b) The Government has been receiving complaints/ grievances from emigrants and their family members/relatives from time to time, of being cheated by illegal recruitment agencies. Such complaints are forwarded to concerned State Governments and Police authorities urging them to apprehend illegal agents and prosecute them. Since illegal and fake agencies operate from the territories within the States, the State Governments have to promptly stop the illegal activities of such fake agencies and prosecute them, after investigations. The State-wise details of requests for taking action against illegal agencies in 2017 are at **Annexure-I**. On receipt of requests from State Governments, Prosecution Sanction is issued by MEA. Wherever required, such complaints are also referred to Missions/Posts abroad for providing immediate relief/rescue of emigrants in distress, who were recruited by such fake agencies. To raise awareness of safe and legal emigration, the Ministry has launched a media awareness campaign in both print and visual media in different languages with the tag line "Surakshit Jao, Parishikshit Jao" (सुरक्षित जाओ, प्रशिक्षित जाओ) which also highlights the Fact that emigrants for overseas jobs must go only through Registered Recruitment Agents and not fake agencies.

Government has also issued a Standard Operating Procedure on 26th May, 2016, to be followed by State Governments, on receipt of such complaints. The State Governments have also been requested to launch

periodic visual and print media awareness campaign(s) amongst the populace in their regional languages. Two high level meetings have also been held by the Ministry of External Affairs with State Government NRI Departments of all the States, to sensitize them on the need to take prompt action on complaints received against illegal recruiting agents. During their meeting CDs of Media Awareness Campaign of the Ministry in different languages have also been handed over to State Government NRI Ministers and Senior officials, requesting them to spread the awareness campaign in their local/ regional media also.

(c) & (d) Reports are received by Indian Missions/Posts in the Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries, about Indian workers, being denied appropriate living and working conditions and denial of legitimate labour rights and benefits as also long working hours, refusal to grant exit/re-entry permits for visit to India, refusal to allow the worker on final exit visa after completion of their contracts and non-provision of medical and insurance facilities, incidents of confinement etc. Immediately on receipt of such complaints, the Indian Missions take them up with the concerned local government authorities for resolution. The Government has taken several steps to safeguard the interests of Indian emigrants to the Gulf countries, these are:

- (i) The on-line MADAD portal enables the emigrant workers and their family members to register their consular grievances online and track their redressal.
- (ii) Grievances related to Overseas Employment in notified Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries including Gulf countries, can also be logged in directly by emigrants/relatives or through the Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) on eMigrate portal. These grievances are settled by respective jurisdictional Protectors of Emigrants (PoEs) as per laid down procedures.
- (iii) Missions especially in ECR countries also conduct Open Houses on a regular basis where workers can seek redressal of their grievances.
- (iv) A multi-lingual 24X7 Helpline of Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) in New Delhi provides information, guidance and grievance redressal on all issues and problems pertaining to overseas employment of Indian nationals.
- (v) Missions in Gulf countries have also established 24x7 helplines and Toll Free help lines for the benefit of Indian workers to seek help.
- (vi) Indian Workers Resource Centres (IWRC) have been set up at Dubai and Sharjah (UAE), Riyadh and Jeddah (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), to provide guidance and counselling on all matters pertaining to overseas Indian workers.
- (vii) Missions in Gulf provide free legal counseling, free interpretation service and assistance in death cases.
- (viii) Migrant Resource Centres are operational in Delhi, Kochi, Hyderabad, Chennai and Lucknow.

- (ix) Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) is in place to assist Indian nationals abroad in times of distress, on a means tested basis.
- (x) Suitable accommodation to distressed Indian nationals has been setup in Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE and Malaysia to provide temporary accommodation.
- (xi) Labour and Manpower Cooperation MoUs/Agreements are already in place with the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries that provide the institutional framework to comprehensively discuss and review labour related issues.

ANNEXURE-I

State-wise details of requests forwarded by Ministry of External Affairs for taking action against illegal agencies in 2017

Sl. No.	State/UT	Number of requests forwarded
1.	Andhra Pradesh	13
2.	Bihar	04
3.	Chandigarh	16
4.	Chhattisgarh	02
4.	Delhi	94
5.	Gujarat	08
6.	Haryana	14
7.	Himachal Pradesh	05
8.	Jammu & Kashmir	03
8.	Karnataka	11
9.	Kerala	15
10.	Madhya Pradesh	3
11.	Maharashtra	54
12.	Odisha	01
13.	Punjab	51
14.	Pudducherry	01
15.	Rajasthan	11
16.	Tamil Nadu	28
17.	Telengana	17
18.	Uttar Pradesh	79
19.	Uttarakhand	06

20.	West Bengal	10
	Total	446
