

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 810

ANSWERED ON- 29/11/2024

TRAFFICKING OF SOFTWARE ENGINEERS TO OVERSEAS COUNTRIES

810. SHRI SHAFI PARAMBIL

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the trafficking of software engineers to overseas countries where they are forced to engage in cyber crime and other fraudulent activities;**
- (b) if so, the details thereof;**
- (c) the initiatives taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to save these professionals from bonded labour and trafficking; and**
- (d) the details of the role of embassies in the process of supporting these professionals?**

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a & b) It has come to the notice of the Government instances of dubious firms involved in fake recruitment job offers have lured Indian nationals including software engineers mostly through social media channels to foreign countries particularly to South-East Asian countries and made them to carry out cyber crime and other fraudulent activities from scam centres operating in these countries. The exact number of Indian nationals stuck in these countries is not known as Indian nationals reach these scam centres on their own volition through fraudulent/unscrupulous recruitment agents/agencies and through illegal channels. The Ministry of Home Affairs has set up the 'Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre' (I4C) as an attached office to deal with all types of cyber crime in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.

(c & d) Government accords utmost priority to the safety, security and well-being of Indian nationals abroad. Government of India has raised this issue at political level with the host Government from time to time. Missions/Posts take up the issue of rescue and repatriation of Indian nationals actively with the local Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other concerned Government agencies of the host country like Immigration, Labour Department, Home Affairs, Defence and Border Affairs and law enforcement agencies. With the concerted efforts of our Embassies in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar, the number of Indian nationals

including software engineers rescued till date is mentioned in the table below:

Country	No. of Indian National rescued
Cambodia	1091
Lao PDR	770
Myanmar	497

The Government has established various channels to enable Indian nationals abroad to reach out to the Mission/Post in case they need any assistance. They can contact the Missions/Posts through walk-in interview, email, multilingual 24x7 emergency numbers, grievance redressal portal like MADAD, CPGAMS, and eMigrate, and social media etc.

Ministry issues advisories and social media posts about the fake job rackets from time to time. Similar communications are also issued by the respective Indian Missions/Posts abroad through their official websites, social media handles and print media. Our Missions in South-East Asian countries issued detailed advisories to alert prospective job seekers, and advise them to verify all antecedents of recruiting agents and companies before accepting any kind of employment offer and not be enticed and entrapped in the fraudulent job offers in these countries.

Ministry, in coordination with the Indian Missions/Posts abroad and offices of Protectors of Emigrants in India, take prompt action whenever instances of exploitation of job seekers by illegal agents come to notice. A list of 3,094 unregistered agents (till October 2024) has been notified on e-Migrate portal. This information is regularly updated based on the complaints filed by the aggrieved individuals and based on the inputs received from our Missions/Posts abroad. The complaint against the illegal agents and the dubious firms luring Indian youth in false recruitment offers through various channels are regularly shared with the respective State Governments and other agencies such as I4C, MHA for suitable action. To spread awareness on cyber crime, the Government has taken steps which inter-alia include, dissemination of relevant information through SMS, I4C social media account, radio campaigns, engaged MyGov for publicity in multiple channels, organizing cyber safety and security awareness weeks in association with States/UTs, newspaper advertisement on digital arrest scams, announcements in Delhi Metros on digital arrest and other modus operandi of cyber crimes.
