

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 1906

ANSWERED ON- 02/08/2024

RESCUE OF INDIAN WORKERS IN ITALY

1906. SHRI V K SREEKANDAN

PROF. SOUGATA RAY

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

(a) Whether the Italian Police rescued 33 Indian farm labourers from the Northern Verona province from slavery and took the two abusers in custody, if so, the details thereof including diplomatic measures taken up with the Italian Government in this regard;

(b) Whether still a large number of fake visa rackets are operating in the country recruiting vulnerable poor people by offering good job and other perks abroad, if so, the details thereof;

(c) The details of steps taken so far to curb such types of illegal recruitments by fake agencies;

(d) Whether the Government is aware that large number of students were recruited to various foreign countries in the name of education visa; and

(e) If so, the details thereof and measures taken to control such types of illegal recruitment in future?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) The Indian Embassy in Rome and Consulate in Milan are in contact with the local Police of Legnano (Verona) on the action taken against the two perpetrators in the matter of 33 Indians rescued by the Italian authorities on July 5, 2024. As per information shared by the local police, the two perpetrators were arrested/ detained for two days, their personal belongings were seized and the matter is under investigation as per the Italian judicial procedure.

Indian Embassy in Rome and Consulate in Milan are working to ensure the safety and well-being of the Indian workers in Italy. The affected Indian nationals have been provided with shelter/accommodation, guidance about job prospects and Italian residence permit. The matter has been taken up with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy seeking information and necessary action against the perpetrators.

(b to e) Some cases have come to the notice of the Ministry of illegal agents luring vulnerable people by offering good jobs and other perks abroad including in the name of education visa. Ministry comes to know about fraudulent activities of fake visa / illegal recruitment agents in the country based on the complaints filed by aggrieved migrants or their friends/relatives, who have been cheated by such agents including in the

name of education visa. Based on such information, quick and decisive action is taken by the Ministry and concerned Indian Missions/Posts abroad. The complaint is referred to the respective State police for investigation and prosecution.

Ministry has issued Standard Operating Procedure to be followed by State Governments on receipt of complaints against such fake agencies. The Ministry has also been coordinating with concerned stakeholders including State governments and law enforcement agencies to disseminate information about the benefits of safe and legal channels and overseas employment opportunities.

The process of emigration of Indian workers having Emigration Clearance Required (ECR) category passports, is regulated under the Emigration Act, 1983, which is administered by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) through Overseas Employment (OE) and Protector General of Emigrants (PGE) Division. As per the Emigration Act 1983, no persons/agencies can function as recruiting agent without a valid certificate issued by the registering authority.

Visual and print media campaigns are launched from time to time, encouraging emigrants to utilize the services of the registered Recruitment Agents and not to go through illegal/fake agents. These messages are also being uploaded and disseminated through social media profile of the Ministry and Missions/Post abroad and other means for

greater outreach. The States are encouraged to initiate awareness campaigns disseminating activities in their respective jurisdictions.

Information about the legal and illegal agents is also uploaded and updated on regular basis on the e-Migrate Portal. Till June 2024, a total of 3,042 illegal agents have been notified on the portal.
