

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2378  
ANSWERED ON:11.03.2015  
ALLEGED EXPLOITATION OF INDIAN WORKERS IN US  
Scindia Shri Jyotiraditya Madhavrao

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

- (a) whether hundreds of Indian workers hired to work in the US were allegedly kept in labour camps and treated inhumanly in Mississippi as reported in Hindustan Times dated 20th February, 2015;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government is also aware of the alleged brutal assault of an Indian by police in the USA and if so, the details in this regard;
- (d) whether the Union Government has taken up these issues with the US Government; and
- (e) if so, the details and response of US thereto?

**Answer**

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

(a) & (b) Government has seen reports that more than 500 Indian workers were recruited by a marine fabrication company M/s Signal International, under the United States Guest Worker Program on H2B visas during 2005-2008. They were reportedly lodged in poor living conditions. They had filed several suits against M/s Signal International in Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi courts. An officer from the Consulate General of India, Houston, had visited the workers in 2008 and had extended all possible assistance. In 2008, the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs included M/s Signal International in blacklisted Foreign Employers Prior Approval Category (PAC) List.

On 18 February 2015, a U.S. Federal jury ruled in one of the suits that M/s Signal International, New Orleans lawyer Malvern C. Burnett and India-based recruiter Sachin Dewan are liable to pay US \$ 14 million compensatory damages to the 5 Indian guest workers who filed the suit.

(c) to (e) Government is aware that on February 6, 2015, Mr. Sureshbhai Patel, a 57-year old Indian national was assaulted in Madison, Alabama, USA. The Ministry of External Affairs immediately took up the matter and expressed serious concern with the US Embassy in New Delhi. Our Embassy in Washington DC also strongly raised the matter with the Department of State, Government of the United States. Consul General of India, Atlanta visited Mr. Sureshbhai Patel at the Huntsville Hospital and gave him a cheque for US\$ 8000 from the Indian Community Welfare Fund of the Consulate.

Consul General of India, Atlanta also visited Alabama and met the Mayor of Madison Mr. Troy Trulock and the Governor of Alabama, Mr. Robert Bentley. Consequent to the Government of India's efforts and outreach, Governor of Alabama Mr. Robert Bentley issued a letter of apology on February 17 to our Consul General, 'deeply regretting' the 'tragic incident' and apologizing for the 'unfortunate use of excessive force'. An investigation was initiated by the local authorities and the concerned officer was arrested for assault in the third degree.