

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION DIARY NO- 405
ANSWERED ON- 28/11/2024

HUMAN TRAFFICKING TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES

405. SHRI SANT BALBIR SINGH

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

- (a) the steps taken by the Government to stop human trafficking from Punjab through travel agents;
- (b) whether Government has any knowledge of captive Indian women or their trafficking in the Gulf countries, if so, the details thereof, and if not, the reasons therefor alongwith details of measures taken in this regard; and
- (c) the number of cases that have been solved by Indian embassies in Arab countries in the last five years regarding youths trapped by agents abroad and the number of travel agents against whom action has been taken?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) Ministry is aware of fraudulent activities by some illegal/unscrupulous recruitment agents/agencies in the country, including that in Punjab. Complaints have also been filed by aggrieved emigrants or their relatives/friends who have been cheated by their employers. It comes to Ministry's notice that various travel agents in Punjab, who are not authorised to engage in recruitment for overseas employment as per the provisions of The Emigration Act 1983, carry out this work illegally.

Ministry issues advisories through eMigrate portal, social media handles and other modes of publicity about the perils of fake job rackets and ways to prevent the same. Till October 2024, a total of 3,094 illegal agents in country including that in Punjab have been notified on the eMigrate portal. The awareness campaign on safe and legal migration through eMigrate portal is carried out by the Ministry across the country including that in Punjab by conducting workshops, trainings, information sessions, digital campaigns for media groups, police officials and law enforcement agencies, local administration, aspiring recruiting agents, entrepreneurs and general public. During these sessions awareness on emigration regulations, schemes beneficial for emigrants like Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY), Pre-Departure Orientation Training (PDOT), eMigrate portal and various advisories issued by Indian Embassies are brought to the notice of all stakeholders.

As and when complaints of illegal migration/human trafficking are received, such matters are referred to the State police for investigation and prosecution under the relevant legal provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and other legislation in place including that enacted by the Punjab Government like Punjab Prevention of Human Smuggling Act, 2012. In the cyber domain, action is also taken against illegal recruiting agents in association with Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C), MHA and State Police authorities. Requests to take down social media posts of illegal recruiting

agencies from all over India including Punjab have been regularly shared with I4C and in a recent joint operation of Ministry with Punjab Police, a total of 38 FIRs has been registered against the illegal recruiting agencies based in Punjab.

(b) Missions/Posts from time to time receive requests for repatriation to India from distressed female workers facing issues related to excessive work, mistreatment, confiscation of passports, denial of entry/exit permit/renewal of visa/final exit permit, and non-payment of salary etc. As and when such cases are reported, the Missions/Posts take prompt action in coordination with the employer/sponsor/agent and local authorities and extend all possible assistance to the aggrieved Indian female worker.

(c) As per the data available with the Indian Missions/Posts in Arab countries, the country-wise details of the cases/issues related to Indian nationals including youths and female workers resolved during the last 5 years is given in the table below.

Country	Number of cases resolved
Bahrain	35
Kuwait	7,330
Oman	17,454
Qatar	239
Saudi Arabia	10,023
United Arab Emirates	3,568
Libya	83
Syria	5
Iraq	180
Total	38,917

These issues pertain to delay in payment/non-payment of salaries, retention of passport, unfair working conditions, sub-standard accommodation, extended working hours, ill treatment/harassment, etc.
