

THE DAILY NEWS LINE

by Faraz



FOREIGN WORKER HOPEFULS CHEATED IN THE MILLIONS BY MAHARAGAMA AGENCY

It is reported that over 300 potential foreign workers have been defrauded of millions of dollars by promising to provide jobs in Romania.

The majority of these youth have been affected - leaving them destitute and homeless.

The impact of this alleged fraud has been felt far and wide and very importantly impacting on family members who have often mortgaged - the only property they may own and have inherited over the generations.

This government-registered foreign employment agency in Maharagama has been collecting money from individuals, each amounting to Rs. 1,850,000, on the pretext of providing employment in Romania.

The aggrieved individuals say that this money has been received from time to time over a period of 8 months, claiming that they will be traveling abroad.

Even though three years has elapsed going abroad has been a dream for them.

The math is not hard to do: there's about 400 people who have paid the bulk of the monies asked by the agency. At a million a pop that's 400 million. Even at half of that a deposit in a bank would yield at least Rs 1.5 million per month.

Although at the time the agency had stated via the official Foreign Employment Bureau that the official amount to be paid was Rs 1,300,000

Some say that the property owners have mortgaged their gold and other land they own to find and pay for this money.

Conversely the would be foreign workers are currently paying a huge amount of interest on that money and have been forced to leave their families and go out on the streets. In at least one instance the applicant has been asked to get out of the family home and is totally destitute. To service borrowings of Rs 1 million would require - at gini poli mudalali level - around 50-75,000 per month.

It is surprising that no responsible state institution has yet taken legal action in a context where more than 300 people have been caught up in a shameful fraud that has cost them and their families by embezzling such a large amount of money.

During an investigation conducted by the Foreign Employment Agency, we learned that there are more than 500 complaints against this foreign service institution located in Maharagama.

This shows that this same government-registered foreign employment agency has been defrauding millions of rupees in broad daylight by promising foreign employment opportunities.

Over time, several of these people began to realize that they, had been caught up in a large-scale fraud that had led them to dream of moving to Romania through this employment agency.

The agency has had its license revoked but the agency has collected letters from those who have paid saying they will wait as the visa is expected very soon.

The applicants began to oppose this scenario realising the agency was living not only with their monies but also with their dreams of foreign employment.

Upon learning of this, this foreign employment agency has issued notices against them through lawyers, taking steps to shut their mouths and cause them to fall into the trap.

They said with tears in their eyes that they have informed all the institutions that can report this large-scale fraud, and that they have not yet received a proper response.

Despite committing such a huge deception, we discovered that the owner of this foreign employment agency had started another foreign employment agency in the Battaramulla area under the name of his wife.

It is unimaginable that such fraudulent acts can be committed in broad daylight, defrauding the poor and needy and collecting money, and then remaining free.

These people, who have been caught in this fraud and are in extreme distress, are requesting for the last time that the government intervene to recover the money they paid to the foreign employment agency and their passports, bring all those responsible to justice.

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