

PKR: Gov't officers trafficking in Bangladeshi workers
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Government officers have been "trafficking" in thousands of Bangladeshi workers into Malaysia by issuing questionable tourist visas recently, aided by an increase in flights, claimed PKR.

PKR central leadership council member R Sivarasa has alleged that dubious practices may be carried out by the Malaysian High Commission in Dhaka, a travel agent and immigration officials at the KL International Airport (KLIA) to facilitate the arrival of some 1,000 Bangladeshi workers a day on so-called one-month tourist visas.

"Enforcement agencies here should have immediately red-flagged the fact that a country like Bangladesh is purportedly sending 1,000 tourists a day to Malaysia, bearing in mind that even India has only three daily flights arriving a day at KLIA," he said in a statement.

bangladesh foreign workers migrants 030108The Subang MP said that since March this year, there had been six direct flights a day from Dhaka to Kuala Lumpur and further alleged that a Bangladesh company played a key role in issuing a large number of tourist visas.

Sivarasa claimed that the alleged travel agent was appointed by Malaysia Airlines (MAS) as its general sales agent in the second half of 2012 and then in March, got MAS to double its long-standing daily flight from Dhaka to two flights a day.

The same company was also recently added by the Malaysian High Commission to a list of 25 companies appointed and authorised to facilitate applications for visas to Malaysia.

Sivarasa also claimed that many Bangladeshis were trafficked in using false documentation and inflated payments of up to 32,000 Taka (about RM1,300) for each tourist visa, over 20 times more than the official fee payable for a visa of 500 Taka (RM20), even with a permissible service charge of up to 1,000 Taka (RM40).

"I am told it is obvious at plain sight that many of those who arrive do not look like tourists and are in actual fact migrant workers who are on a one-way trip into Malaysia to find work. This raises the inference of corrupt practice at the KLIA end," he said.

He said that he had lodged a report police report and urged relevant government authorities to investigate. He would also forward evidence to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission for further action.

This would include names and passport numbers of five Bangladeshi nationals who have obtained so-called "tourist" visas in the manner PKR described.

PKR had also previously claimed that "phantom voters" including Bangladeshis were brought in to vote for BN in the 13th general election, a claim which was refuted by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

Malaysiakini, meanwhile, is contacting the Malaysian High Commission in Dhaka as well as the Immigration Department for their responses.

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