

**Rela causes shame with arrest of foreigner**  
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The government has again been embarrassed by a volunteer corps which rounds up illegal immigrants after it arrested and wrongly detained an Indian national working on a tourism film, a report said today.

Tourism Minister Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor apologised after the unidentified man, in Malaysia with a German film production team, was detained for three hours Monday by two members of the Rela corps, the New Straits Times reported.

"I am very sorry for what has happened. They came here to shoot a documentary on dream hotels in Asia but it turned out to be a nightmare for them," Tengku Adnan was quoted saying.

The first secretary for the Indian High Commission, Sudhir Kumar Mehrotra, told the newspaper he received a complaint which was forwarded to Malaysia's foreign ministry.

"He was walking near his hotel when he was approached by two men who did not identify themselves and could barely speak English," Mehrotra was quoted saying.

"Thinking he was a Bangladeshi illegal immigrant, they hauled him into a van and took him to the Rela headquarters where he was kept for three hours," he said.

Mehrotra said the man in his 40s was released after immigration officials saw his passport, and had left Malaysia.

**Abuses of power**

The uniformed 500,000-strong citizen Rela taskforce has attracted a barrage of criticism for abuses of power, including from the US-based Human Rights Watch, which earlier this month called for it to be immediately disbanded.

The press counsellor for the German embassy here, Armin Koessler, said the mission had not been officially contacted by the German company and had not officially complained to the ministry of foreign affairs.

"We regret that this incident happened," Koessler told AFP.

Officials from the Indian High Commission could not be immediately reached.

Rela volunteers have legal immunity and are allowed to arrest individuals as well as enter and search any premises without a warrant.

Human Rights Watch has said Rela, which assists officials, is using violence and extortion against foreigners and is responsible for numerous cases of illegal detentions.