

India asks Gulf countries to end sponsorship regime

Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs Vayalar Ravi said "We have signed labour agreements with most of the Gulf countries. They have promised to do away with sponsorship but most of them have not acted yet."

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New Delhi: India has initiated active diplomatic process with the Gulf countries to get the sponsorship regulations - the main reason behind violations of human rights in the region - abolished, Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs Vayalar Ravi said Saturday.

"We have signed labour agreements with most of the Gulf countries. They have promised to do away with sponsorship but most of them have not acted yet," Ravi said here at the 9th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, India's annual event to connect with its 25-million-strong diaspora in 130 countries.

He said low-paid workers in the Gulf region are facing problems mainly because of the sponsorship. 'Sometimes they just can't do anything. They are on the mercy of sponsors.'

The minister said the government has taken initiative to provide legal assistance to the Indian diaspora across the world, especially in the Gulf countries.

"We are providing free legal assistance to the people in the Gulf countries. Our aim is to provide legal assistance for the people across the world," Ravi said.

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