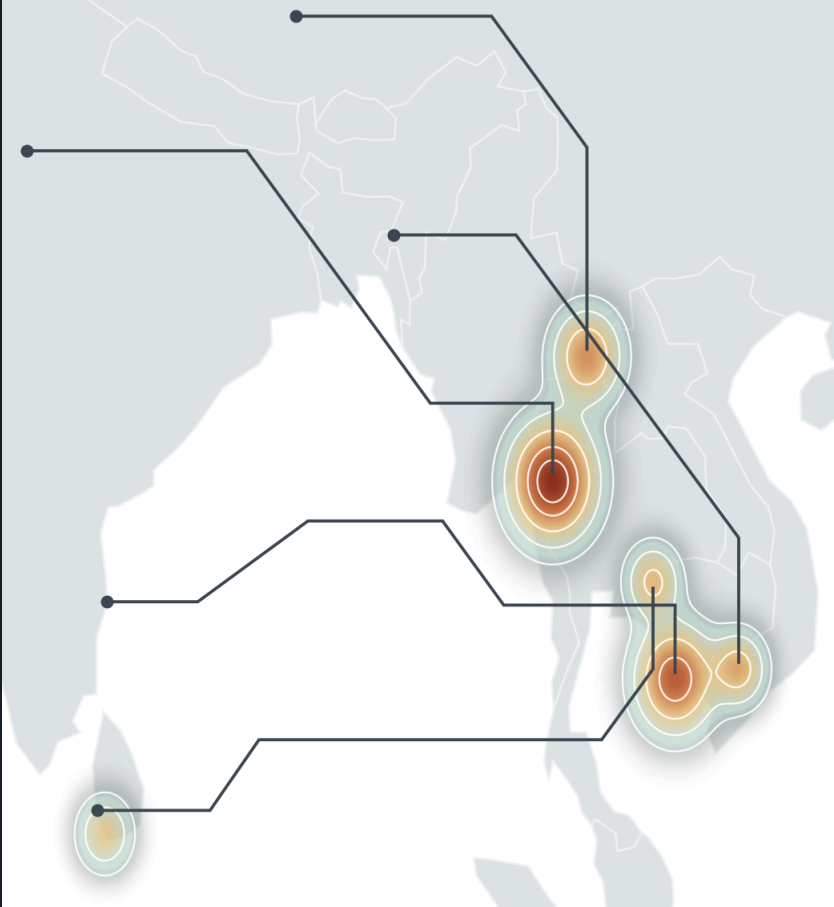


Fake Overseas Job Offers & Trafficking into Scam Compounds



How South Asian job seekers are recruited, moved and held in cyber-scam compounds — the evidence, the pattern, and a decision framework to stop it before departure.

EVIDENCE BASE	SCALE	TOP SIGNAL	DISPLACEMENT
63 coded sources from 118 results reviewed	300,000+ people in SE Asian scam operations (UN)	18 of 63 sources cite a promise of high or easy pay	1,000+ foreigners arrested in Sri Lanka, Jan–May 2026

PREPARED BY

K. H. Militha Mihiranga
Data Solutions Consultant
Data Tune

OFFICE

555/24 Ranmuthugala,
Kadawatha,
Sri Lanka

CONTACT

info@dtlinux.com
+94 77 527 1186
www.dtlinux.com

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PREPARED & PUBLISHED BY

K. H. Militha Mihiranga
Data Solutions Consultant · Data Tune
555/24 Ranmuthugala, Kadawatha, Sri Lanka
info@dtlinux.com · +94 77 527 1186
www.dtlinux.com

EVIDENCE PROVENANCE — READ FIRST

Every figure, pattern and conclusion in this report is drawn from a structured evidence register of **63 published sources**, screened from 118 search results. 33 of those sources are official (United Nations bodies, governments, embassies, courts and sanctions authorities); the remainder are recognised NGOs, research institutes and established news organisations. No victim was contacted, no private group was entered and no personal data was collected. Numbers are quoted as published, with their period and source, and are never added together across sources. Section 18 lists every source so each claim can be checked independently.

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Executive Summary

What the evidence shows, and what it means for anyone considering a job abroad.

SCALE 300,000+ people estimated inside SE Asian scam operations (OHCHR, Feb 2026)	REACH 66 countries of origin of trafficked victims, as of March 2025	STILL HELD 5,300+ people reported trapped near the Myanmar–Thai border, June 2026
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Across 63 graded sources, the headline result is not simply that South Asians are being trafficked — that is established beyond doubt. It is that **the trap is highly predictable**. The same small set of signals recurs across Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh and Nepal: a promise of high or easy pay (documented in 18 sources), travel on a tourist or visit visa (12), recruitment through a public advert (11), and a 'digital' role such as IT, data entry or customer service (13). The violence comes later; the warning signs come first, and they are visible before a single ticket is bought.

That predictability is what makes prevention possible. A risk that looks different every time cannot be screened. A risk that repeats the same four or five signals can be scored — and Section 11 converts those signals into a simple decision rule that a job seeker, a parent or a recruitment officer can apply in two minutes.

The five findings

FINDING	EVIDENCE	SECTION
1 South Asians are a core recruitment pool. India reports 2,411 citizens brought home from Myanmar compounds in about 18 months; Nepal 612 from four countries; Bangladesh 583 from Cambodia in one month; Sri Lanka four official batches totalling 81.	25 sources, 19 official	§06
2 The bait is consistent. High pay, a visit visa, a public advert and a 'digital' role appear together far more often than chance; high pay alone is cited in 18 of 63 sources.	Fig. 7 and 8	§07
3 Victims are moved through third countries. Dubai and Bangkok recur as staging points; Sri Lankan authorities report people already in the UAE being sent to Myanmar in groups.	16 sources	§08
4 Crackdowns displace rather than end the industry. Over 70% of Cambodian compounds mapped by Amnesty appear to have been bypassed; Sri Lanka arrested 1,000+ foreigners in scam-centre raids in five months of 2026, against 430 in all of 2024.	Fig. 4 and 11	§09–10
5 The trap can be scored before departure. An evidence-weighted scorecard places a typical bait offer at 17 points, far above the 8-point 'stop and report' threshold, while a genuine licensed offer scores 3.	Fig. 13	§11–12

THE ONE-SENTENCE CONCLUSION

Young South Asians are not trafficked because they travel abroad; they are trafficked because an offer that pays well for simple computer work, arrives through an advert or an informal agent, and asks them to fly on a visit visa is almost always the same offer — and every one of those signals can be checked, and refused, before departure.

Research Questions & Definitions

Four questions, the method applied to each, and where each is answered.

The study was framed around the questions a job seeker, a family, a recruitment regulator and a platform each need answered. Each question was fixed before the evidence was coded, so the findings could not be shaped to fit a preferred answer.

Q	QUESTION	METHOD APPLIED	ANSWERED IN
Q1	How large is the problem, and which South Asian countries are affected?	Extraction of official counts; comparison by country and period	§05–§06
Q2	How are victims recruited, and what do the offers have in common?	Indicator coding across all sources; frequency and country matrix	§07–§08
Q3	Where are victims taken, and is the pattern moving?	Route reconstruction; enforcement timeline; displacement evidence	§08–§10
Q4	Can a fake offer be identified before departure?	Evidence-weighted scorecard with fixed decision bands, tested on a scenario	§11–§12

Definitions adopted for this report

TERM	OPERATIONAL DEFINITION USED IN THIS REPORT
Scam compound	A guarded residential-and-office complex in which workers, many of them trafficked, are made to run online fraud. Often a former casino, hotel or economic-zone building.
Forced criminality	Trafficking in which the exploitation is the commission of crimes — here, online fraud — under coercion.
Bait offer	An employment offer whose real purpose is to move the recipient into a compound. Identified here by its documented signals, not by hindsight.
Indicator	A recruitment or exploitation feature recorded in a source text, coded to one of 13 categories (§17).
Independent source	A distinct publication after syndicated copies of the same story have been removed. An agency story republished by five outlets counts once.
Official source (grade A)	A UN body, government, embassy, court or sanctions authority — either published directly or quoted by name.

WHAT THIS REPORT IS NOT

It is not a census of victims, not an assessment of any nationality or community, and not an accusation against any person beyond what courts and sanctions authorities have themselves published. It is an evidence synthesis designed to help people recognise and refuse a dangerous offer.

How the Evidence Was Collected

Search design, screening, verification and coding — in the order they were applied.

Trafficking is hidden by design, so no single dataset describes it. The only reliable picture comes from assembling many partial records — rescue announcements, advisories, sanctions notices, NGO investigations and court filings — and checking them against one another. The collection sequence below was applied to every item.

STAGE	WHAT IS CAPTURED OR APPLIED	RULE
Search design	13 structured queries combining a nationality (Sri Lankan, Indian, Bangladeshi, Nepali, Pakistani) with a mechanism (rescue, advisory, compound, sanctions, hotline)	Current to the cut-off date
Screening	Each result read in full and tagged: include, duplicate, off-scope or low reliability	Every result logged
De-duplication	Syndicated wire stories and re-published press releases collapsed to one record	One story, one count
Grading	Each included source graded A (official), B (NGO / research) or C (journalism)	Grade by origin of the claim
Coding	Country focus and 13 recruitment and exploitation indicators recorded from the source text	Only what the text states
Verification	Every figure used in a finding traced to its original publisher and period	No figure without a date

Screening yield

118 search results were reviewed; 63 survived to the evidence register, a yield of **53.4%**. The largest loss is duplication, which is expected: a single rescue flight is typically reported by several outlets from the same ministry statement.

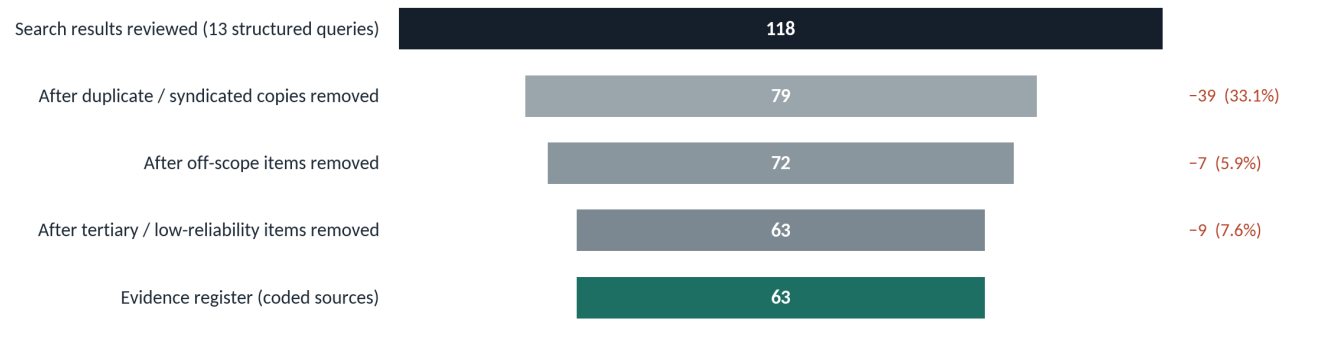


FIGURE 1 — Screening waterfall. Each bar is scaled to the full set of results reviewed; removals at each gate are shown at right.

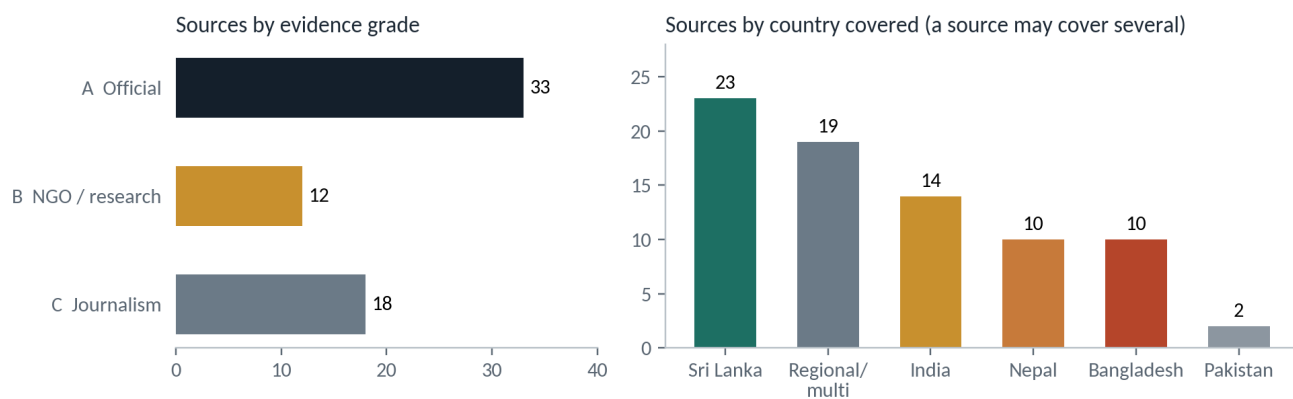


FIGURE 2 — Composition of the evidence register. 33 of 63 sources are official. Sri Lanka is the most heavily covered country because the register was built for a Sri Lankan readership.

COLLECTION POSITION

Only published material was used. No private group, chat channel or social-media account was joined, no recruiter or victim was contacted, and no personal data was recorded at any stage. Victim names that appear in some source articles were not carried into the register. Processing follows the principles of Sri Lanka's Personal Data Protection Act No. 9 of 2022.

How This Problem Is Analysed

The seven-step method, and the rules that decide when something counts as a finding.

Hidden-crime problems share a structure: the harm is concealed, the numbers are partial, and the people involved have strong reasons to mislead. The method below is built for that structure. It works from what is published, forces every claim through more than one source, and ends with a decision rather than a description.

STEP	WHAT IS DONE	WHY IT MATTERS
1 Frame	Fix the questions and definitions before reading the evidence (§02)	Stops the evidence being bent to a preferred story
2 Collect	Structured search across official, NGO and news sources (§03)	No single source sees the whole chain
3 Screen & grade	Remove duplicates and weak items; grade the rest A / B / C	Separates corroboration from repetition
4 Code	Record country and 13 indicators from each text	Turns narrative into countable patterns
5 Triangulate	Accept a finding only when independent sources agree	Guards against single-source error or bias
6 Quantify	Count indicator frequency; build the country matrix; compare periods	Shows which signals are common and which are rare
7 Decide	Convert the most frequent signals into a weighted scorecard with fixed bands (§11)	Makes the evidence usable by a non-specialist

RULE FOR STATING A FINDING

$$\text{Finding if } n_{\text{independent}} \geq 2 \text{ and } n_A + n_B \geq 1$$

A pattern is reported as a **finding** only when at least two independent sources support it and at least one is official or from a recognised NGO or research body. A figure found in one source only is labelled *reported* and given with its date and publisher. Where sources disagree, both figures are shown with their periods; they are never averaged.

INDICATOR WEIGHT

$$w_k = 3 \text{ if } n_k \geq 10 \cdot 2 \text{ if } 5 \leq n_k \leq 9 \cdot 1 \text{ otherwise}$$

n_k is the number of independent sources (of 63) that document indicator k . The weight is taken from the evidence, not chosen by the analyst: the more often a signal appears across independent cases, the more points it carries in the scorecard. The bands are wide on purpose, so a single extra source cannot flip a weight.

CONFIDENCE GRADE FOR A CONCLUSION

High: $n_A \geq 1$ and $n \geq 5$ · Moderate: $n_A + n_B \geq 1$ and $n \geq 3$ · Indicative: otherwise

Applied mechanically to every conclusion in §13, so the confidence label cannot be adjusted after the fact.

Scale of the Problem

How many people, how much money, and how many countries.

MEKONG SHARE	REVENUE	VICTIM ORIGINS
74%	~\$64B	~80
of scam compounds, by satellite imagery (OHCHR)	estimated global annual scam revenue	countries recorded by Interpol, March 2026

The UN Human Rights Office's February 2026 report, *A wicked problem*, describes the industry as having reached industrial proportions. Credible estimates put at least 300,000 people inside operations across Southeast Asia, trafficked from 66 countries as of March 2025, with roughly three-quarters of compounds in the Mekong region and spread into South Asia, the Gulf, West Africa, the Pacific and the Americas. Survivors interviewed for that report came from Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka among others.

Rescues are large but do not keep pace. A multinational operation in February 2025 released some 7,000 people from the Thailand–Myanmar border; yet in June 2026 a Thai civil-society network still counted more than 5,300 people held at four militia-controlled locations in the same area.

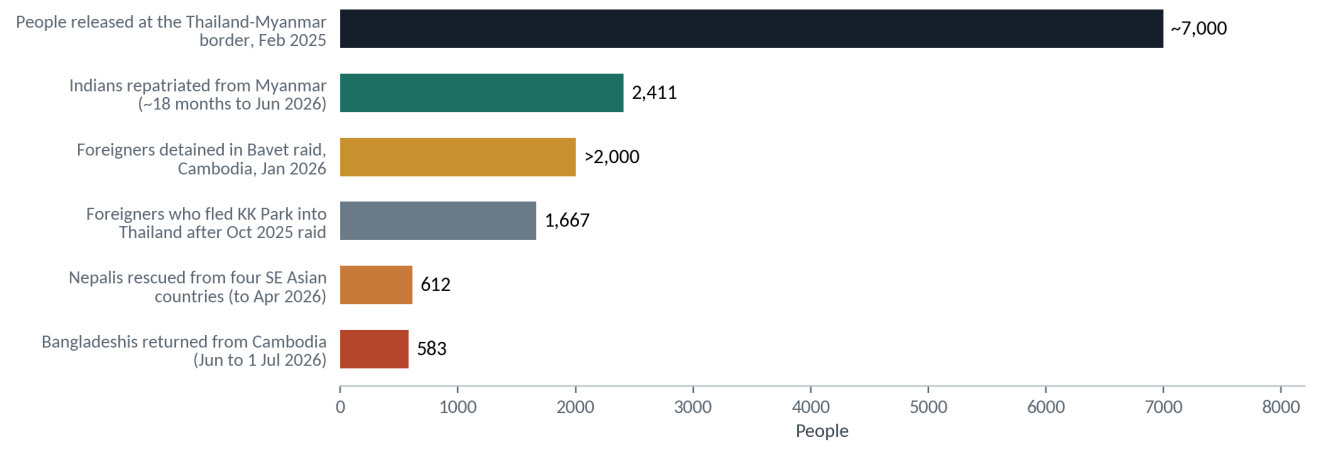


FIGURE 3 — Reported releases, detentions and repatriations. Periods and definitions differ, so bars must not be added together.

WHY THE TOTALS UNDERSTATE THE PROBLEM

Every number on this page counts people who were found, freed or flown home. People still inside, people who paid a ransom privately, and people who returned without contacting authorities are not in any of them.

Who Is Being Targeted

Country evidence for Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's National Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force (NAHTTF), through the Ministry of Defence, has warned that traffickers target IT professionals with high-paying jobs abroad, bring them to Dubai for supposed interviews and then move them into Myanmar, where investigators documented torture including electrocution. It also reported Sri Lankans already in the UAE being sent to Myanmar in groups. The Foreign Ministry has since run repeated rescues from Myawaddy.

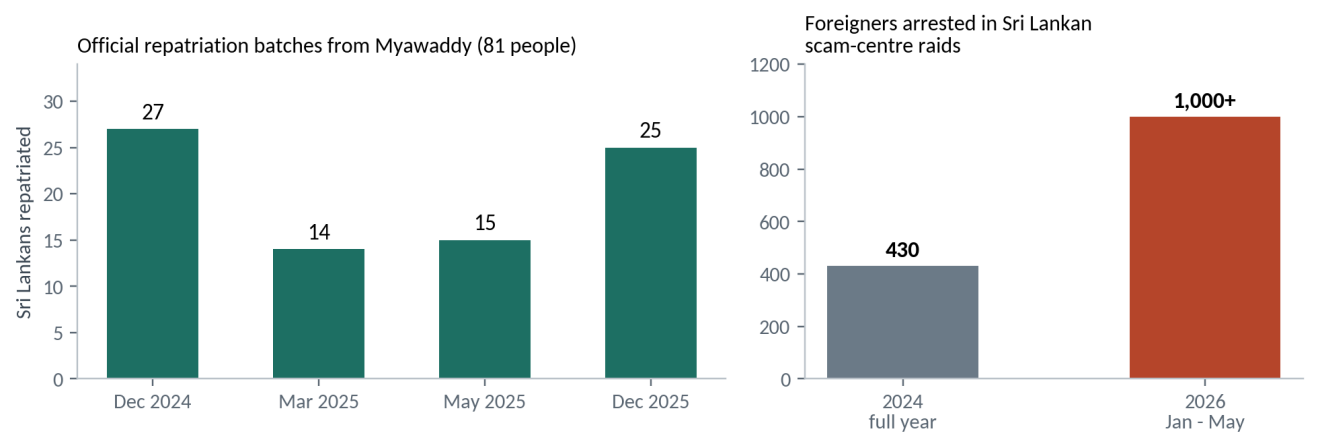


FIGURE 4 — Left: officially announced repatriation batches from Myawaddy. Right: foreign nationals arrested in scam-centre raids inside Sri Lanka.

SRI LANKA BUREAU OF FOREIGN EMPLOYMENT, 2025	VALUE
Complaints received	4,734
Cases filed in court against foreign-employment fraudsters	791
Fraudsters arrested	121
Raids by the Special Investigation Division	20
Money recovered for victims	Rs. 37.43 million

Source: SLBFE figures reported January 2026. These cover all foreign-employment fraud, not only scam-compound cases.

India

India's Ministry of External Affairs first warned in September 2022 about fake 'Digital Sales and Marketing Executive' jobs in Thailand, recruited through agents in Dubai, Bangkok and India, with victims taken illegally into Myanmar. In June 2026 the Foreign Secretary said 2,411 Indians had been repatriated from Myanmar compounds in about 18 months, with more than 150 still believed trapped, many trafficked via third countries.

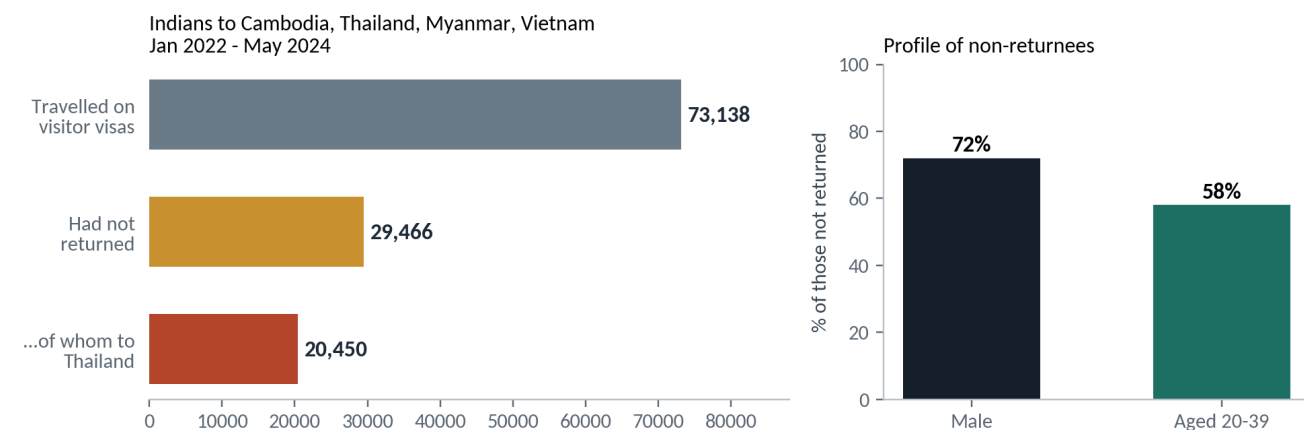


FIGURE 5 — Bureau of Immigration data (Jan 2022 – May 2024) as reported by Business Standard and Indian Express. Not returning is not proof of trafficking; the figure marks the population authorities were directed to investigate.

Bangladesh

Returnees from Cambodia describe well-paid job promises, visas that did not match the promised work, Bangladeshi handlers on arrival, brief hotel stays and then sale to guarded compounds in Sihanoukville or the Bokor Mountains. Families often paid again to recover passports or secure release. BRAC's Migration Programme says fraudsters advertise computer-operator, typist and call-centre posts on fake websites, Facebook, WhatsApp and Telegram.

REPORTED RETURN	PEOPLE	SOURCE
Returned from Myanmar, 19 Sep 2025	18	BRAC via The Business Standard
Returned from Myanmar, 22 Jan 2026	8	BRAC via Dhaka Tribune
Repatriated from Cambodia over four days, June 2026	221	Reported June 2026
Repatriated from Cambodia, June to 1 Jul 2026 (cumulative)	583	BRAC via Kathmandu Post
Returned from Cambodia, 3 Sep 2026	38	BRAC via The Business Standard

Nepal and Pakistan

Nepal's Foreign Ministry reported 612 citizens rescued from four countries by April 2026, most of them from Cambodia. Its Bangkok embassy has repeatedly warned against travelling to Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar or Thailand on tourist visas in pursuit of quick earnings. Nepali arrivals in Cambodia rose almost a hundred-fold between 2021 and 2025. Pakistan appears in the register through enforcement records: a February 2025 Thai–Cambodian raid in Poipet freed 215 foreigners, including 50 Pakistanis and 48 Indians.

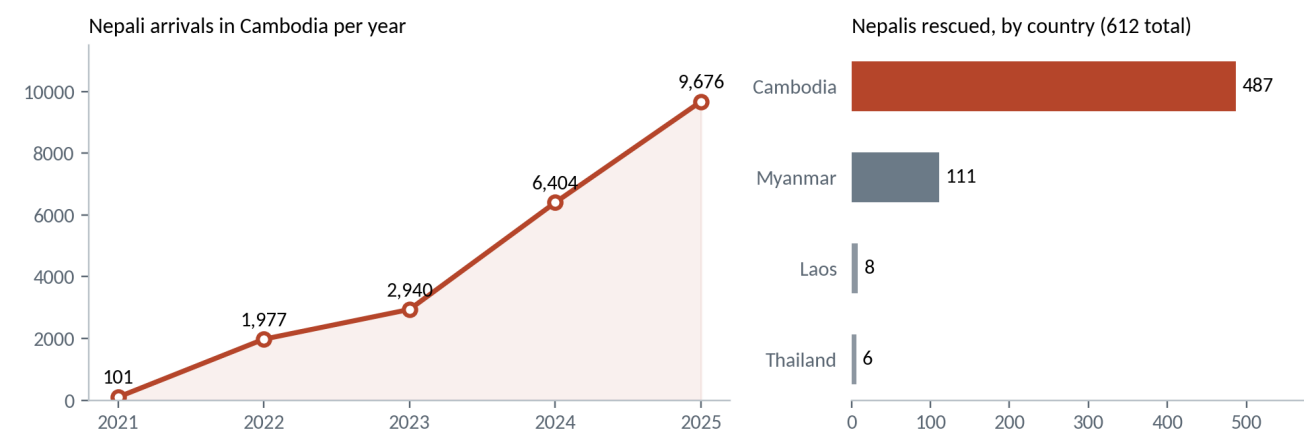


FIGURE 6 — Nepal: arrivals in Cambodia by year (embassy tourism data) and rescues by country (Foreign Ministry, April 2026).

Anatomy of the Bait

What the fake offers have in common, and how the pattern differs by country.

Each of the 63 sources was coded for thirteen indicators. Counting them shows which signals are common enough to act on and which are occasional. The result is a clear hierarchy: the promise of money, the visit visa and the public advert dominate; ransom and scam targets are documented less often, largely because they are only visible after rescue.

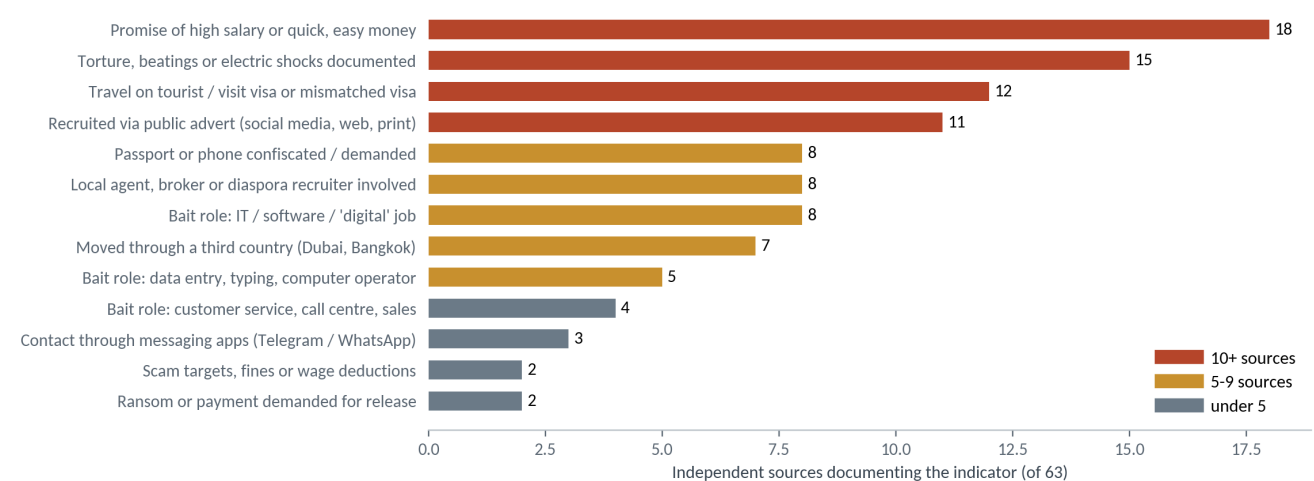


FIGURE 7 — How often each indicator is documented. Colour marks the weight band used in the scorecard (\$11).

	Sri Lanka	India	Bangladesh	Nepal	Regional / multi
Promise of high salary or quick, easy money	6	2	5	7	–
Torture, beatings or electric shocks documented	5	2	5	1	6
Travel on tourist / visit visa or mismatched visa	3	3	1	4	1
Recruited via public advert (social media, web, print)	4	2	1	2	2
Bait role: IT / software / 'digital' job	6	1	–	1	–
Local agent, broker or diaspora recruiter involved	1	2	3	2	–
Passport or phone confiscated / demanded	–	2	2	2	2
Moved through a third country (Dubai, Bangkok)	3	2	2	–	–
Bait role: data entry, typing, computer operator	1	2	2	–	–
Scam targets, fines or wage deductions	1	1	2	–	1
Bait role: customer service, call centre, sales	1	1	1	1	–
Contact through messaging apps (Telegram / WhatsApp)	1	–	1	–	1
Ransom or payment demanded for release	–	–	1	–	1

FIGURE 8 — Indicator × country matrix. Each cell counts sources documenting the indicator for that country; a source covering several countries counts in each.

The matrix separates two patterns. In **Sri Lanka**, the bait is aimed at skilled people: IT and 'digital' roles appear in six sources, and transit through Dubai in three. In **India and Bangladesh**, the bait is more often entry-level — data entry, typing and call-centre work — and in Bangladesh local brokers are named in three sources. In **Nepal**, the dominant official message concerns tourist-visa travel for quick earnings. The four signals common to every country are money, visa, advert and an office-type role.

THE FINDING THAT MATTERS MOST

The recruitment stage is the only stage the victim fully controls, and it is also the stage with the most consistent signals. Everything after departure — the border crossing, the compound, the violence — varies by syndicate and location. The offer does not.

08

The Recruitment Chain & Routes

From advert to compound in six stages.



FIGURE 9 — The six-stage chain reconstructed from official advisories, NGO interviews and rescue statements.

The chain is the same whichever country the victim leaves from. What changes is the entry point. Skilled Sri Lankans are often approached through apparently professional IT recruitment; entry-level job seekers in India, Bangladesh and Nepal through social-media posts and local agents. Once the victim has travelled, the chain converges: arrival in Bangkok or a Thai border town, a long car journey, and an irregular crossing into Myanmar, Cambodia or Laos.

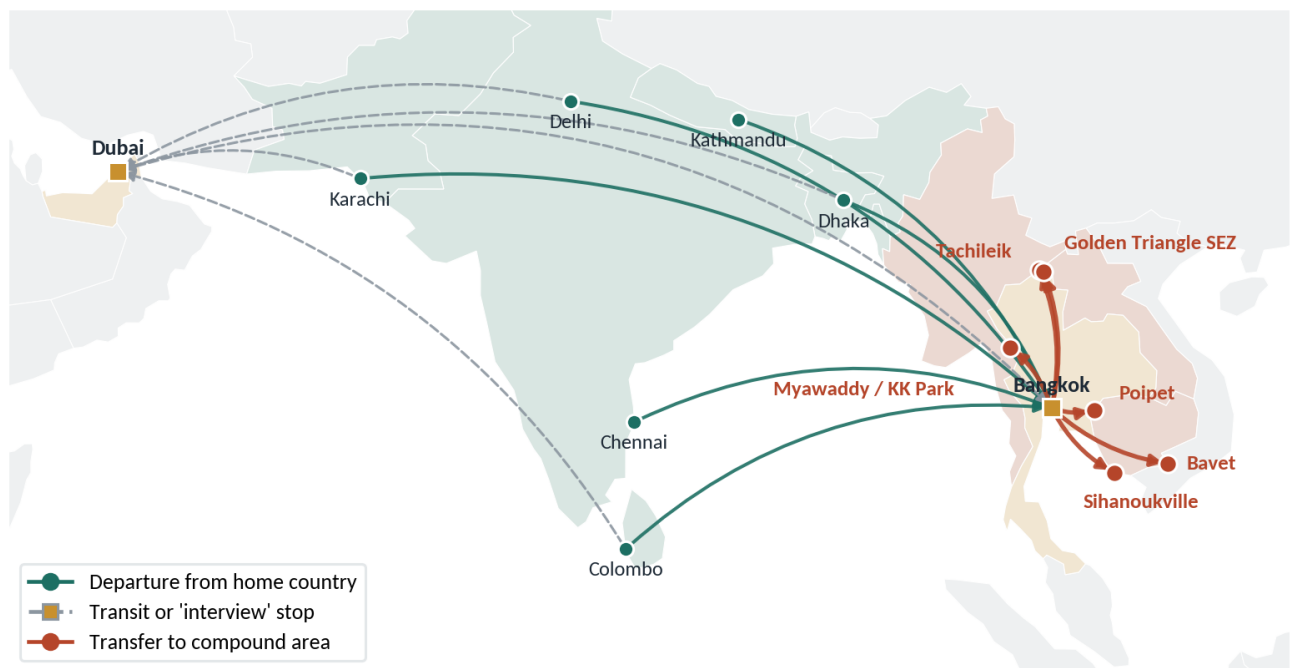


FIGURE 10 — Schematic of reported movement routes. Transit points shift as enforcement shifts; the map shows patterns documented in the register, not a complete network.

TRANSIT POINT	DOCUMENTED ROLE	SUPPORTING SOURCES
Dubai / UAE	Staging point for 'interviews'; Sri Lankans and Bangladeshis already in the UAE redirected to Myanmar; agents based there	Sri Lanka NAHTTF; India MEA; The Business Standard; AsiaNews
Bangkok	Arrival point on a tourist visa; handover to drivers	India MEA; Nepal embassy; AsiaNews
Mae Sot (Thailand)	Border crossing into Myawaddy; also the main rescue and repatriation point	Thai authorities; Indian and Sri Lankan embassies
Third countries generally	Used to avoid detection at home airports	India Foreign Secretary, June 2026

Inside the Compounds

What survivors and investigators document once the door has closed.

DOCUMENTED PRACTICE EVIDENCE

Confinement	Passports and phones confiscated; walls, razor wire, guards and cameras; punishment for escape attempts (OHCHR; Amnesty)
Violence	Torture, beatings, electric-shock batons, 'dark rooms', solitary confinement, sexual abuse, forced abortions (OHCHR; Amnesty)
Water punishment	A Sri Lankan survivor described being held in water containers for missing targets (OHCHR, reported 2026)
Targets and fines	A Thai survivor described a daily target of about \$9,500; none of those interviewed by the UN received the full promised wage
Ransom	Relatives shown abuse on video calls to force payments of tens of thousands of dollars (OHCHR)
Resale	Workers threatened with being 'sold' to harsher compounds (OHCHR)
Children	Nine children among 58 survivors interviewed in Cambodia (Amnesty, 2025)

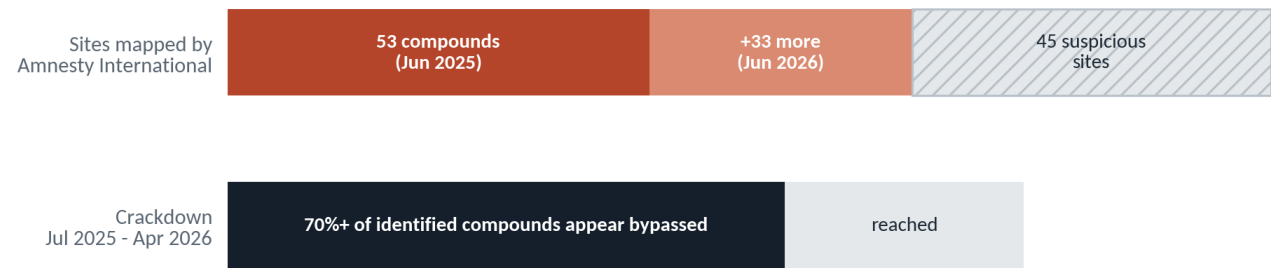


FIGURE 11 — Cambodia: compounds and suspicious sites mapped by Amnesty International (2025 report and June 2026 update), and Amnesty's assessment of the July 2025 - April 2026 crackdown.

Amnesty's 2025 investigation visited 52 of the 53 compounds it identified, across 16 towns and cities, and found that most victims had been lured by deceptive job advertisements on Facebook and Instagram. Its June 2026 follow-up added 33 compounds and testimony from 73 more survivors from 16 countries, including Bangladesh.

WHY THIS SECTION MATTERS FOR PREVENTION

Once inside, escape depends on raids, diplomacy or ransom — none of which the victim controls. Every practice on this page is an argument for stopping the journey at the offer stage.

Displacement & Enforcement

Where the industry is moving, and what has been proven in law.

Publicly reported compound areas

AREA	COUNTRY	DOCUMENTED SIGNIFICANCE
KK Park, Myawaddy	Myanmar	Raided by Myanmar's military in October 2025; 1,667 people from 10+ countries fled into Thailand
Myawaddy / Pha Lu	Myanmar	Named by Indian and Sri Lankan embassies as the destination of trafficked citizens
Sihanoukville, Bokor	Cambodia	Compounds mapped by Amnesty; source of many Bangladeshi rescues in 2026
Bavet	Cambodia	January 2026 raid on 22 buildings; more than 2,000 foreigners detained, including 30 Nepalis
Poipet	Cambodia	February 2025 raid freed 215 foreigners, including 50 Pakistanis and 48 Indians
Galle, Matara, Colombo	Sri Lanka	May 2026 raids: 221 foreigners in Galle and Matara, 280 in Colombo

Sri Lanka as a new base

As pressure rose in Cambodia and Myanmar, some operations moved. Sri Lankan police said more than 1,000 foreign nationals were arrested in scam-centre raids in the first five months of 2026, against 430 in the whole of 2024. Analysts point to an easy visa regime, fast internet and cheap property as the attraction, and warn that the justice system must distinguish network managers from coerced workers, or trafficking victims will be prosecuted as fraudsters.

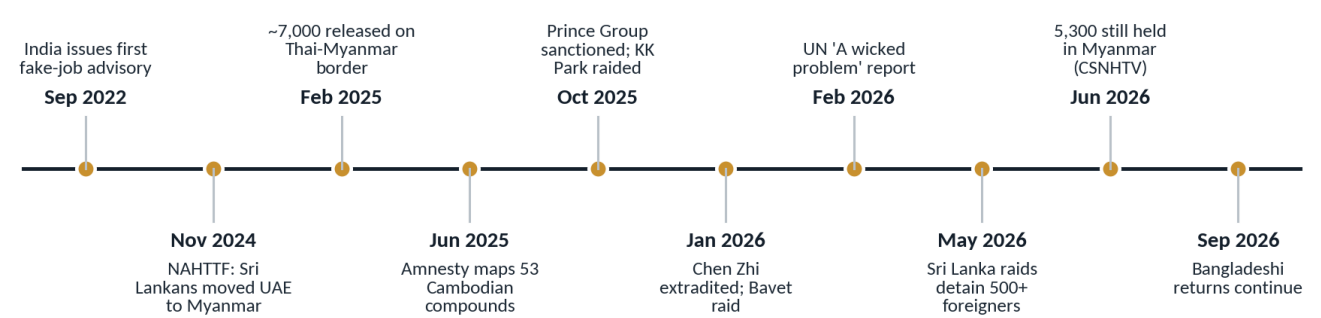


FIGURE 12 — Selected milestones, September 2022 to September 2026.

What enforcement has established

ACTION	AUTHORITY	WHAT IT ESTABLISHES
Prince Group designated a transnational criminal organisation; 146 targets sanctioned (Oct 2025)	US Treasury (OFAC), with UK sanctions	A named conglomerate ran forced-labour scam compounds
Chairman Chen Zhi indicted for wire-fraud and money-laundering conspiracy (Oct 2025)	US Department of Justice	Criminal charges tied to forced-labour compounds
Huione Group cut off from the US financial system (Oct 2025)	US FinCEN	Scam proceeds moved through identifiable financial channels
Chen Zhi arrested in Cambodia and extradited to China (6 Jan 2026)	Cambodia / China	Senior figures are reachable
Kok An network designated (Apr 2026); Prince Group sanctions expanded (23 Jun 2026)	US Treasury (OFAC)	Enforcement is continuing, not one-off

Decision Framework

Scoring an overseas job offer before departure.

The scorecard turns Section 07 into a decision. Each warning sign carries the weight set by the rule in Section 04 — the more independent cases in which it was documented, the more points it is worth. Only signals that are visible *before* departure are included; violence and ransom are excluded because by the time they are visible, the decision has already been made.

WARNING SIGN PRESENT IN THE OFFER	SOURCES	POINTS
Promise of high salary or quick, easy money for the role	18	3
Travel on a tourist, visit or 'on-arrival' visa, or a visa that does not match the job	12	3
Found through a social-media post, website or advert rather than a licensed agency	11	3
Entry-level 'digital' role: IT support, data entry, typing, chat or customer service	13	3
Informal agent, broker, relative or diaspora contact arranges the job	8	2
Passport copy or original requested early, or before any contract	8	2
Route through a third country (e.g. Dubai, then Bangkok) instead of directly	7	2
Interview and contact only through Telegram or WhatsApp	3	1
Maximum possible score		19

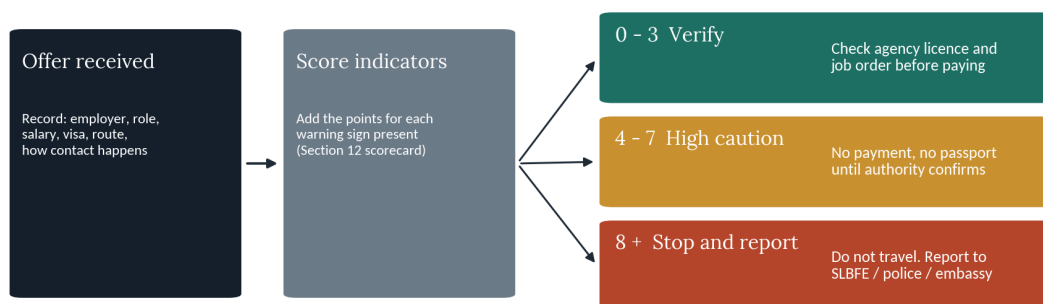


FIGURE 13 — Decision bands. Add the points for every sign present, then act on the band.

BAND	SCORE	ACTION	WHY THE THRESHOLD SITS HERE
Verify	0-3	Confirm the agency licence and job order with the national authority before paying anything	A genuine job advertised online scores 3 on the advert sign alone
High caution	4-7	No payment and no passport until the authority confirms the employer and the work visa	Any two heavily weighted signs together reach this band
Stop and report	8+	Do not travel. Report the offer and keep the evidence (screenshots, numbers, payment requests)	Three heavily weighted signs together; no genuine offer in the evidence combines them

Worked Scenario

Applying the framework to a typical offer, from first contact to decision.

ILLUSTRATIVE SCENARIO

The offer below is a **composite written for this report** from the features documented in the evidence register. It is not a real advertisement and contains no real names, numbers or companies.

Data Entry Executive — Bangkok

Salary USD 1,500 per month plus bonus. No experience needed — basic English and typing only. Free air ticket and hotel. We arrange your visit visa; work permit after arrival. Travel Colombo – Dubai – Bangkok, our driver meets you. Interview on WhatsApp today. Send your passport copy to reserve your seat. Limited places.

Seen by the applicant as a shared post in a Facebook jobs group.

Step-by-step decision

WHAT THE OFFER SAYS	WARNING SIGN	POINTS
USD 1,500 for typing with no experience	High or easy pay	3
'We arrange your visit visa; work permit after arrival'	Visit visa / mismatched visa	3
Shared post in a Facebook group	Advert, not a licensed agency	3
Data entry executive	Entry-level 'digital' role	3
'Send your passport copy to reserve your seat'	Passport requested early	2
Colombo – Dubai – Bangkok	Third-country route	2
'Interview on WhatsApp today'	Messaging-app-only contact	1
Total		17 → Stop and report

Decision and next steps

The offer scores **17**, more than twice the stop threshold. The correct action is not to negotiate or ask for more information from the recruiter, but to stop contact, keep the evidence and report it. In Sri Lanka that means calling the SLBFE hotline 1989 to check the agency and job order, and reporting the post to the SLBFE Special Investigation Division or the police.

For comparison, a genuine offer for a hotel job in Qatar, advertised on Facebook by an SLBFE-licensed agency with an employment visa, a written contract and an office interview, scores **3** — the advert sign only — and falls in the Verify band.

END OF SCENARIO — WHAT THE EVIDENCE PROVES HERE

Every sign in this offer is individually documented in official warnings: high pay and IT or data-entry roles by Sri Lanka's NAHTTF and India's MEA; visit-visa travel by Nepal's embassy, India's Bureau of Immigration data and the US State Department's report on Sri Lanka; Dubai transit by NAHTTF; passport demands and messaging-app contact by UNODC. None of them is speculation, and together they describe the exact route by which the people in Section 06 were trafficked.

13

The Evidence Case

What is proven, how strongly, and on whose authority.

Each conclusion below was tested against the rules in Section 04. The counts are independent sources from the register; the confidence grade is applied mechanically.

CONCLUSION	A	B	C	TOTAL	CONFIDENCE
South Asians are trafficked into SE Asian scam compounds	19	4	2	25	High
Recruitment relies on fake, well-paid job offers	9	3	11	23	High
Victims travel on visit visas, often via third countries	11	0	5	16	High
Victims are confined, abused and extorted	8	5	7	20	High
The industry is industrial-scale and survives crackdowns	2	6	2	10	High
Operations are relocating, including to Sri Lanka	0	1	5	6	Moderate
Named networks face sanctions and prosecution	3	2	1	6	High

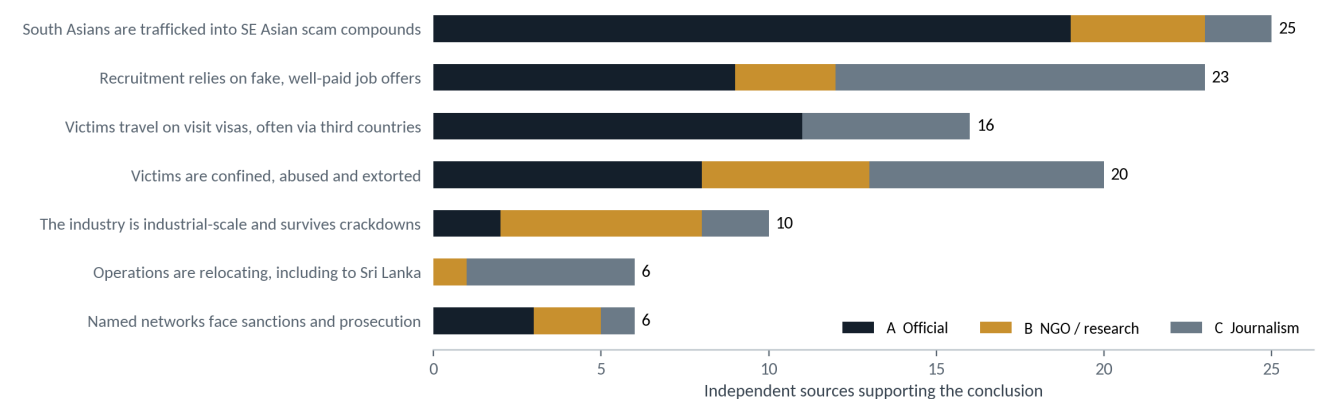


FIGURE 14 — Independent sources supporting each conclusion, by grade.

VERDICT

All seven conclusions meet the finding rule, and 6 of seven reach High confidence with official corroboration. The trafficking of South Asians into scam compounds, the fake-job method used to recruit them, the visa and transit pattern, the abuse inside the compounds, the industry's scale and the legal action against named networks are each established by multiple independent sources — including governments on both sides of the route and the United Nations. The relocation of operations to Sri Lanka is rated Moderate: it is supported by six sources, but most are news reports quoting police and diplomats rather than a primary official publication. It should be read as well-reported and watched closely, not yet as settled.

Recommendations

What each audience should do, and the evidence behind each action.

AUDIENCE	ACTION	BASIS IN THIS REPORT	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
Job seekers and families	Score every overseas offer (§11); never travel for work on a visit visa; verify with the national authority before paying	Visa and pay signals lead the evidence (§07)	No payment or passport shared before verification
Families of people abroad	Agree a daily check-in; keep a copy of the passport, employer name and address; report silence quickly	Phones and passports are taken on arrival (§09)	Missing-contact reports made within days
Recruitment regulators	Publish lists of licensed agencies and job orders in local languages; prosecute unlicensed brokers	Agents named in 8 sources (§07)	Complaints and cases rise, then victims fall
Airport and border officials	Screen young travellers on visit visas to high-risk routes; use safe-migration desks	Visit-visa travel in 12 sources (§07)	Interceptions recorded and followed up
Platforms	Treat pay + visit visa + 'digital' role in one post as a policy violation; act on regulator lists	The combination defines the bait (§11)	Removal time for reported posts
Law enforcement	Apply the non-punishment principle to rescued victims; target local recruiters and money flows	UN guidance; Sri Lanka displacement (§10)	Recruiter prosecutions, not victim prosecutions
Media and educators	Explain the six-stage chain and the scorecard in Sinhala, Tamil, Bengali, Hindi and Nepali	Recruitment is the controllable stage (§07)	Reach among 18–35 job seekers

Verify, Report, Get Help

Official channels, confirmed against published sources at the cut-off date.

COUNTRY	VERIFY AN AGENCY OR JOB	REPORT OR GET HELP
Sri Lanka	SLBFE Information Centre hotline 1989 (24 hours) or (+94) 11 2 880 500; www.slbfe.lk	SLBFE Special Investigation Division 011-2864123; Police emergency 119; Immigration hotline 1962
India	Registered recruiting agents on the eMigrate portal (emigrate.gov.in)	National Cyber Crime Helpline 1930; cybercrime.gov.in ; MADAD consular portal
Bangladesh	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (bmet.gov.bd)	National emergency 999; BRAC Migration Programme
Nepal	Department of Foreign Employment labour approval (dofe.gov.np)	Nepal Police Anti-Human Trafficking Bureau; Embassy of Nepal, Bangkok
Already abroad	—	Your country's embassy in Bangkok, Yangon or Phnom Penh; Thailand anti-trafficking hotline 1300

BEFORE YOU PUBLISH OR SHARE

Helpline numbers change. Confirm each number on the official website on the day you share it.

Limitations, Bias & Ethics

What published evidence can and cannot show, and how this report must be used.

LIMITATION	EFFECT ON THE FINDINGS	MITIGATION APPLIED
Published evidence measures detection, not incidence	Countries with active embassies and media appear larger; hidden cases are missing	Findings framed as documented patterns; no country rankings of victims
Figures differ in period and definition	Rescue, repatriation, detention and non-return counts are not comparable	Every figure dated and sourced; never summed
Media reliance for some facts	18 sources are journalism	Findings require an official or NGO source (\$04)
Coverage bias toward Sri Lanka	Sri Lankan sources are most numerous	Country matrix read within columns, not across
Indicator coding is text-based	A source that omits a feature is coded as not documenting it	Frequencies read as lower bounds
Non-return is not trafficking	India's 29,466 figure includes overstayers and legitimate stays	Stated at the figure; not used as a victim count
No primary interviews	No new testimony is added	Relies on UN, Amnesty and embassy interviews, which are cited

BINDING CONSTRAINTS ON USE

1. This report may not be used to profile, screen out or discriminate against any nationality, region, religion or community of job seekers. 2. It may not be used to name or accuse any individual beyond what courts and sanctions authorities have published. 3. Rescued people must be described as victims, consistent with the UN non-punishment principle. 4. Any published extract must keep the dates and sources attached to its figures.

EVIDENCE DISCLOSURE

No source was excluded because of what it said. Screening decisions were made on duplication, scope and reliability only, and every included source is listed in Section 18 whether or not it supported a headline finding.

Methodology Appendix

Grading scale, coding dictionary and formula glossary.

Evidence grades

GRADE	SOURCE TYPE	EXAMPLES IN THIS REGISTER	COUNT
A	Official: UN body, government, embassy, court, sanctions authority	OHCHR, UNODC, US Treasury, US DOJ, SLBFE, MEA India, Embassy of Nepal	33
B	NGO, international organisation or research institute	Amnesty International, IJM, BRAC, GI-TOC, OCCRP, CFR, FRS	12
C	Established journalism	Kathmandu Post, The Business Standard, Al Jazeera, AsiaNews	18

Indicator dictionary

CODE	DEFINITION	SOURCES	WEIGHT
HIGH_PAY	Promise of high salary or quick, easy money	18	3
VIOLENCE	Torture, beatings or electric shocks documented	15	3
VISA	Travel on tourist / visit visa or mismatched visa	12	3
ADVERT	Recruited via public advert (social media, web, print)	11	3
ROLE_IT	Bait role: IT / software / 'digital' job	8	2
AGENT	Local agent, broker or diaspora recruiter involved	8	2
PASSPORT	Passport or phone confiscated / demanded	8	2
TRANSIT	Moved through a third country (Dubai, Bangkok)	7	2
ROLE_DATA	Bait role: data entry, typing, computer operator	5	2
ROLE_CS	Bait role: customer service, call centre, sales	4	1
MSGAPP	Contact through messaging apps (Telegram / WhatsApp)	3	1
RANSOM	Ransom or payment demanded for release	2	1
TARGETS	Scam targets, fines or wage deductions	2	1

Formula glossary

QUANTITY	EXPRESSION	NOTES
Screening yield	included / reviewed	63 / 118 = 53.4%
Indicator frequency	$n_k = \{\text{sources documenting } k\} $	Counted once per independent source
Indicator weight	$w_k \in \{1, 2, 3\}$ by n_k band	Bands: under 5; 5–9; 10 or more
Offer score	$S = \sum w_k$ over signs present	Maximum 19
Decision band	Verify $S \leq 3$ · Caution 4–7 · Stop $S \geq 8$	Fixed before the scenario was scored
Finding rule	$n \geq 2$ and $n_A + n_B \geq 1$	Otherwise labelled 'reported'

Evidence Register

All 63 included sources, graded and linked. Countries: LK Sri Lanka, IN India, BD Bangladesh, NP Nepal, PK Pakistan, REG regional.

ID	SOURCE	DATE	GRADE	COUNTRY
E01	Ada Derana (SLBFE) — Public urged to contact SLBFE before paying agencies https://adaderana.lk/news/87450	2026-06-13	A	LK
E02	Business Standard — Over 29,000 Indians missing in SE Asia (Bureau of Immigration data) https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/over-29-000-indians-missing-in-se-asia-trapped-...	2024-09-30	A	IN
E03	Daily Mirror (MoFA) — 14 Sri Lankans rescued from cybercrime centers in Myanmar https://www.dailymirror.lk/breaking-news/14-Sri-Lankans-rescued-from-cybercrime-centers-in-M...	2025-03-18	A	LK
E04	Daily News (SLBFE) — SLBFE cautions of online foreign job scam https://www.dailynews.lk/2025/07/01/local/806379/slbfe-cautions-of-online-foreign-job-scam/	2025-07-01	A	LK
E05	Deccan Herald (Embassy) — 8 Indians lured into illegal jobs in Myanmar rescued https://www.deccanherald.com/india/8-indians-lured-into-illegal-jobs-in-myanmar-rescued-3115...	2024	A	IN
E06	Deccan Herald (Embassy) — Indian embassy in Myanmar cautions against fake job offers https://www.deccanherald.com/india/indian-embassy-in-myanmar-cautions-against-fake-job-offer...	2024-06-03	A	IN
E07	Embassy of Sri Lanka, Bangkok — 25 Sri Lankans rescued from Myawaddy repatriated https://bangkok.embassy.gov.lk/25-sri-lankans-rescued-from-cybercrime-centers-in-myawaddy-my...	2025-12-23	A	LK
E08	Embassy of Sri Lanka, Bangkok — 15 Sri Lankans rescued from Myawaddy to be repatriated https://bangkok.embassy.gov.lk/15-sri-lankans-rescued-from-cybercrime-centres-in-myawaddy-my...	2025-05-13	A	LK
E09	Himalayan Times (Embassy) — Three Nepalis rescued from online scam centres in Myanmar https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/three-nepalis-rescued-from-online-scam-centres-in-myanma...	2026-03-12	A	NP
E10	Himalayan Times (Embassy) — 14 Nepalis rescued from illegal online scam centers in Myanmar https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/14-nepalis-rescued-from-illegal-online-scam-centers-in-m...	2025-11-06	A	NP
E11	Kathmandu Post (Embassy) — 51 Nepalis rescued from Cambodia scam centres return home https://kathmandupost.com/nepali-diaspora/2026/03/25/51-nepalis-rescued-from-cambodia-sc-am-c...	2026-03-25	A	NP
E12	Kathmandu Post (MoFA) — 612 Nepalis rescued from Southeast Asia https://kathmandupost.com/national/2026/04/24/612-nepalis-rescued-from-southeast-asia-as-c-am...	2026-04-24	A	NP
E13	Malay Mail / Reuters (Thai Govt) — Thai and Cambodian police free 215 foreigners in Poipet raid https://www.malaymail.com/news/world/2025/02/23/thai-cambodian-police-free-215-foreigner-s-in...	2025-02-23	A	PK IN
E14	Ministry of Defence, Sri Lanka — NAHTTF warning on trafficking of Sri Lankans in the UAE to Myanmar https://www.defence.lk/Article/view_article/28239	2024-11	A	LK

ID	SOURCE	DATE	GRADE	COUNTRY
E15	Newswire (MoFA) — Last batch of Lankans rescued from cybercrime centres in Myanmar https://www.newswire.lk/2025/05/06/last-batch-of-lankans-rescued-from-cybercrime-centres-i n...	2025-05-06	A	LK
E16	OHCHR — UN report details grave abuses against those trafficked into scam centres https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/02/un-report-details-grave-abuses-against-thos e...	2026-02-20	A	REG LK IN BD
E17	Republica (Embassy) — 37 Nepalis trafficked to Myanmar scam centers rescued https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/37-nepalis-trafficked-to-myanmar-scam-centers-re-...	2025-11-18	A	NP
E18	Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment — SLBFE general information https://www.slbfe.lk/general-information/	n.d.	A	LK
E19	Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment — SLBFE complaint management https://www.slbfe.lk/complaint-management/	n.d.	A	LK
E20	Sri Lanka Mirror (SLBFE) — SLBFE cracks down on foreign employment fraud https://srilankamirror.com/news/slbfe-cracks-down-on-foreign-employment-fraud-recovers-ove r...	2026-01-07	A	LK
E21	Statista / Indian Express (BoI data) — Indian states with most visitors not returned from SE Asia https://www.statista.com/chart/amp/33158/indian-states-with-the-highest-number-of-visitors-n ...	2024	A	IN
E22	The Morning — Sri Lankans lured to cyber scam centres in Myanmar, warns NAHTTF https://www.themorning.lk/articles/ljklb61ln80AuxB8176U	n.d.	A	LK
E23	The Tribune (Embassy) — 4 Indians trapped in Myawaddy scam repatriated https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/world/myanmar-4-indians-trapped-in-myawaddy-scam-rep atriat...	2025-04-18	A	IN
E24	The Tribune (MEA / Thai authorities) — India to repatriate citizens after Myanmar cybercrime raid https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/world/india-to-repatriate-citizens-detained-in-thailand-af-...	2025-10	A	IN BD LK NP REG
E25	The Tribune (MEA) — 283 Indians rescued from Myanmar job scam, repatriated https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/india/283-indians-rescued-from-myanmar-job-scam-repatr iate...	2025-03	A	IN
E26	The Tribune / ANI — Over 2,400 Indians repatriated from Myanmar scam compounds (MEA) https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/bilateral-cooperation/over-2400-indians-repatriated-from-m-...	2026-06-01	A	IN
E27	ThePrint (MEA) — MEA issues advisory against fake job claims in Thailand https://theprint.in/india/external-affairs-ministry-issues-advisory-against-fake-job-offers-...	2022-09-24	A	IN
E28	UN News — UN report exposes torture, rape in SE Asia's scam centres https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/02/1167012	2026-02-22	A	REG
E29	UNODC ROSEAP — Too good to be true: fake job traps leading youth into trafficking https://www.unodc.org/roseap/en/TrappedInScamCrime/article2.html	n.d.	A	REG
E30	US Department of Justice — Chairman of Prince Group indicted for forced-labor scam compounds https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/chairman-prince-group-indicted-operating-cambodian-forced-la-b-...	2025-10	A	REG
E31	US Department of State — 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Sri Lanka https://2021-2025.state.gov/reports/2024-trafficking-in-persons-report/sri-lanka/	2024-06-24	A	LK

ID	SOURCE	DATE	GRADE	COUNTRY
E32	US Treasury — U.S. and U.K. take largest action ever targeting SE Asian cybercriminal networks https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sb0278	2025-10	A	REG
E33	US Treasury — Treasury further dismantles overseas scam operations https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sb0538	2026-06-23	A	REG
E34	Amnesty International — 'I was someone else's property' (report) https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa23/9447/2025/en/	2025-06	B	REG
E35	Amnesty International — Cambodia: government allows slavery and torture to flourish https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/06/cambodia-government-allows-slavery-torture-flourish/	2025-06-26	B	REG
E36	Amnesty International — Cambodia: scamming compounds bypassed despite 'crackdown' https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2026/06/cambodia-evidence-suggests-scamming-compounds-bypassed-despite-crackdown/	2026-06	B	REG BD
E37	Council on Foreign Relations — How Myanmar became a global center for cyber scams https://www.cfr.org/articles/how-myanmar-became-global-center-cyber-scams	2024-05-31	B	REG
E38	Dhaka Tribune (BRAC) — 37 Bangladeshis rescued from Cambodian cyber scam compounds return home https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/412432/37-bangladeshis-rescued-from-cambodian-cyber-scam-compounds-return-home	2026-06-12	B	BD
E39	E-International Relations — Sri Lanka's brief window to stop displaced cyber-scam networks https://www.e-ir.info/2026/07/13/sri-lankas-brief-window-to-stop-displaced-cyber-scam-networks/	2026-07-13	B	LK
E40	Foundation for Strategic Research — Scam centers in the Mekong region: a strategic challenge for the EU https://www.frstrategie.org/en/publications/notes/scam-centers-mekong-region-strategic-challenge-for-the-eu	2026	B	REG
E41	Global Initiative (GI-TOC) — Will Chen Zhi's arrest be a wake-up call for scam bosses? https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/will-chen-zhis-arrest-and-extradition-be-a-wake-up-call-for-scam-bosses/	2026-04-22	B	REG
E42	HSF Kramer — OFAC expands sanctions on Prince Group https://www.hsfkramer.com/notes/sanctions/2026-posts/ofac-expands-sanctions-on-prince-group/	2026-06-30	B	REG
E43	International Justice Mission — Nearly 260 workers freed from Myanmar scam compounds identified as victims https://www.ijm.org/news/nearly-260-workers-freed-myanmar-scam-compounds-identified-trafficking-victims/	2025-08-30	B	LK NP BD PK REG
E44	OCCRP — 47 Nepalis rescued from scam centers in Myanmar arrive in Kathmandu https://www.occrp.org/en/news/news-story-47-nepalis-rescued-from-scam-centers-in-myanmar-arrive-kathmandu	2025-12-11	B	NP
E45	The Business Standard (BRAC) — 38 more Bangladeshis return from Cambodia https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/38-more-bangladeshis-return-cambodia-after-rescue-scam-compounds/	2026-09-03	B	BD
E46	Al Jazeera — More than 5,300 people still held in Myanmar scam centres https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/6/23/more-than-5300-people-still-held-in-myanmar-scam-centres/	2026-06-23	C	REG
E47	AsiaNews — Dozens of Sri Lankans victims of trafficking in Myanmar https://www.asianews.it/news-en/Dozens-of-Sri-Lankans-victims-of-human-trafficking-and-exploitation-in-myanmar	2024-07-08	C	LK

ID	SOURCE	DATE	GRADE	COUNTRY
E48	Forbes — UN report exposes human trafficking behind SE Asia scam centers https://www.forbes.com/sites/steveweisman/2026/02/21/un-report-exposes-human-trafficking-beh...	2026-02-21	C	REG
E49	Grand Pinnacle Tribune — India rescues 270 citizens from Myanmar scam centers https://evrimagaci.org/gpt/india-rescues-270-citizens-from-myanmar-scam-centers-515637	2025-11-08	C	IN
E50	Grand Pinnacle Tribune — India rescues citizens from Myanmar cyber scam compounds https://evrimagaci.org/gpt/india-rescues-citizens-from-myanmar-cyber-scam-compounds-516270	2025-11-13	C	IN
E51	ICT Frame — Cambodia scam victims rescued and returned to Nepal https://ictframe.com/cambodia-scam-victims-rescued-safely/	2026-03-19	C	NP
E52	Kathmandu Post — Sri Lanka emerges as new hub for cyber scam networks https://kathmandupost.com/national/2026/06/10/sri-lanka-emerges-as-new-hub-for-cyber-scam-ne...	2026-06-10	C	LK NP IN
E53	Kathmandu Post — How Bangladeshi jobseekers are trafficked into Cambodia's scam compounds https://kathmandupost.com/world/2026/07/16/how-bangladeshi-jobseekers-are-trafficked-into-ca...	2026-07-16	C	BD
E54	Malay Mail / Reuters — Cambodia to keep up crackdown after arrest of alleged mastermind https://malaymail.com/news/world/2026/01/14/continued-combat-cambodia-to-keep-up-crack-down-o...	2026-01-14	C	REG
E55	Only Kashmir — 221 Bangladeshis rescued from Cambodia scam centres https://onlykashmir.in/30309/221-bangladeshis-rescued-from-cambodia-scam-centres/	2026-06-17	C	BD
E56	Radio Free Asia — Myanmar militia 'ready to return' trafficked foreigners https://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/myanmar/2025/myanmar-250130-rfa03.htm	2025-01-30	C	REG
E57	ScamWatch HQ — Sri Lanka scams 2026 https://scamwatchhq.com/sri-lanka-scams-2026-scam-centre-invasion-colombo-raids/	2026-07-30	C	LK
E58	Sunday Times (Sri Lanka) — Major crackdown on scam centres amid fears Lanka becoming cybercrime hub https://www.sundaytimes.lk/260517/columns/major-crackdown-on-scam-centres-amid-fears-lanka-b...	2026-05-17	C	LK
E59	The Business Standard — Enslaved in Myanmar's scam centres, rescued Bangladeshis carry scars https://www.tbsnews.net/features/panorama/enslaved-myanmars-scam-centres-rescued-bangladeshi...	2025-03-04	C	BD
E60	The Business Standard — Bangladeshi migrants' journey from Dubai to Myanmar's scam centres https://www.tbsnews.net/thoughts/trapped-nightmare-bangladeshi-migrants-hellish-journey-duba...	2025-03-18	C	BD
E61	The Sri Lanka — Online scams in Sri Lanka https://thesrilanka.lk/online-scams-in-sri-lanka/	2026-06-12	C	LK
E62	The Standard / AFP — Crackdown in SE Asia pushes scam networks to Sri Lanka https://www.thestandard.com.hk/world/article/332193/Crackdown-in-Southeast-Asia-pushes-sc-am...	2026-05-17	C	LK
E63	UCA News — Economic hardship triggers trafficking of Sri Lankans https://www.ucanews.com/news/economic-hardship-triggers-trafficking-of-sri-lankans/105993	2024-08-09	C	LK

About this report

This Insight Report is an independent evidence synthesis published by Data Tune to help job seekers, families, regulators, platforms and journalists recognise and refuse fake overseas job offers that lead to trafficking. It reflects published evidence up to the cut-off date shown in the Document Control section.

PREPARED BY

K. H. Militha Mihiranga
Data Solutions Consultant
Data Tune

OFFICE & CONTACT

555/24 Ranmuthugala, Kadawatha, Sri Lanka
Email info@dtlinux.com
Telephone +94 77 527 1186
Website www.dtlinux.com

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