

## **Recruitment of nurses to foreign shores picks up**

Overseas recruitment of nurses by government agencies has gained pace this year with twice the deployment in the first quarter this year than the whole of 2015-16.

The Overseas Development and Employment Promotion Consultants (ODEPC), one of the four agencies authorised by the Union government, sent 565 nurses in the first quarter of 2016-17 against 340 nurses to various organisations abroad last year.

However, fake recruiting agencies are spreading rumours that the government process is slow and that the old system will soon be back, said a senior ODEPC official.

The government had banned private agencies from recruiting nurses because of the large-scale fraud and exploitation of nurses unearthed early last year.

Only ODEPC, NoRKA Roots, and the Tamil Nadu Overseas Manpower Corporation, Chennai, are authorised to recruit nurses to 18 Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries. An agency of the Uttar Pradesh government has also been authorised recently.

NoRKA Roots had arranged interviews for 4,500 candidates so far, of which 40 per cent had been selected. About 250 had been deployed while the rest are going through the processes, a senior official at NoRKA Roots said.

ODEPC has announced 1,200 new vacancies, mostly to countries such as Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, and Ireland. It is expected to announce vacancies in the UK soon. “There have been no complaints so far and procedural delays depend on the recruiting countries,” said an official of the recruiting agency.

“These delays existed even when private agencies were recruiting. A typical HRD attestation in one country takes a minimum of 45 days. European recruiters are strict with English comprehension and IELTS credentials,” the official said.

Foreign recruiters also had taken long to associate with the government agencies because of their long-standing association with certain private agencies.

The private agencies had been keeping their clients saying that the existing arrangement was temporary, officials at the recruiting agencies said.