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Memorandum of Understanding between India and Bahrain on Cooperation for Prevention of Human Trafficking especially trafficking in Women and Children

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its approval for a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Bahrain on cooperation for prevention of human trafficking especially trafficking in women and children; rescue, recovery, repatriation and re-integration of victims of trafficking.

This MoU will strengthen the bonds of friendship between the two countries and increase the bilateral cooperation on the issues of prevention, rescue, recovery and repatriation related to human trafficking especially women and children expeditiously.

The MoU is expected to be signed during the Home Ministers upcoming visit to Bahrain in the first week of April 2016.

The following are the salient features of the Memorandum of Understanding between India and Kingdom of Bahrain:

- i. To strengthen cooperation to prevent to all forms of human trafficking, especially that of women and children and ensure speedy investigation and prosecution of traffickers and organized crime syndicates in either country.
- ii. Taking preventive measures that would eliminate human trafficking in women and children and in protecting the rights off victims of trafficking.
- iii. Anti-trafficking Cells and Task Force will work on both sides to prevent human trafficking.
- iv. Police and other concerned authorities will work in close cooperation and exchange information which can be used to interdict human traffickers,
- v. The repatriation of victims would be done as expeditiously as possible and home country will undertake the safe and effective re-integration of the victims,
- vi. A Joint Task Force with representatives from both sides would be constituted to monitor the working of the MoU.

Background:

As a destination of trafficking, South Asian countries are mainly affected by domestic trafficking, or trafficking from the neighboring countries. However, South Asian victims are also increasingly detected in the Middle East.

India is a source and transit country as far as trafficking to Bahrain is concerned. On the other hand, Bahrain is a destination country for men and women subjected to trafficking in persons, specifically forced labour and forced prostitution. Men and women from South Asia migrate voluntarily to Bahrain to work as domestic workers or as unskilled laborers in the construction and service industries. However, some face conditions of forced labour after arriving in Bahrain, through use of such practices as unlawful withholding of passport, restrictions on movement, contract substitution, non-payment of wages, threats, and physical or sexual abuse.

The reinforcement of anti-trafficking efforts at all levels between the Kingdom of Bahrain and India is essential for prevention and protection of victims. This requires mutual cooperation among both the countries for intelligence sharing, joint investigation and a coordinated response to the challenges of human trafficking. For this purpose, it is proposed to sign an MoU with the Kingdom of Bahrain. India has already signed one MoU to prevent trafficking with Bangladesh.
