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## Guyana tightens visa issuance process in India

By Staff Reporter - June 19, 2017



THE Guyana High Commission in India has taken steps to tighten up its visa issuance process to guard against possibility of human trafficking and other unsavory acts

This was expressed by Deputy High Commissioner to the eastern state, Forbes July, when the Guyana Chronicle caught up with him during a brief visit to the Guyana on Monday. In an update on the Guyana/ India relationship since the seating of the coalition government, July mentioned that one area addressed by the Commission, is the strengthening of the visa issuance process. The High Commission, according to the deputy, is responsible for the issuance of visas and the monitoring and maintenance of that process. These visas are given for example, for business purposes, school, or visit.

July said that like other Caribbean and Latin American countries, Guyana too has increased scrutiny in terms of the visa process, but of course not with the intent of making it difficult for persons to access Guyana, but to ensure the efficiency of the process.

When put to the diplomat that there were accusations in the past that Indian nationals were having easy access to Guyana, with some even attaining official Guyanese documentation and going on to vote in the country's elections, July said that the Commission is responsible for issuing visas, and have no control over what happens when the foreigners arrive in Guyana. The deputy however reaffirmed that cases were found where foreign nationals were accessing Guyanese visas easily.

On the other hand, July said, the potential of Trafficking in Persons (TIP), was also a good reason to tighten the visa process, since this phenomena seems to be growing in many countries. He said given his experience with the issue of TIP and its ramifications during his stint at the Washington, US mission, he is well aware of its potential and the Commission too saw it fit to look into that area.

“...part of that increase in scrutiny (for visa issuance) would pertain to the fact that there are new officials assigned to India, the natural process we would go through, is to see what was happening before, where there might be loopholes or where things can be tightened up a bit more,” July stated. Prior to the coalition government entering office, former Home Affairs Minister and attorney-at-law, Ronald Gajraj, served as Guyana's High Commissioner to India under the previous administration. Gajraj was accused of allegedly setting up a death squad here that killed hundreds of Guyanese.