

Gujarat: Fake visa racket busted, two arrested

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Representative image.

VADODARA: Special Operations Group (SOG) sleuths on Tuesday busted a fake visa racket and arrested two persons. The accused duo is said to have cheated over 150 persons from across the state to the tune of about Rs 2.5 crore. The police said that it is yet to arrest another key accused who is based in Delhi.

According to the police, one of the accused Mahesh Rabari had started a travel consultancy agency in the city. "People used to approach him for visa to Canada. The primary idea of the applicants was to reach Canada and then get some work there. Rabari used to promise them Canada's visa and charge Rs 25,000 towards the processing fees that were non-refundable," said HM Chauhan, police inspector, SOG.

Mahesh gave the visa work to Ahmedabad-based Chirag Bhatt who had roped in Vikas Sharma, a resident of Delhi. "After taking passports of the applicants, Mahesh used to contact them after some time. He used to put electronic travel authorization (ETA) stickers on the passports and gave them to the applicants. Mahesh used to tell the applicants that they can travel to Canada on ETA," Chauhan told TOI.

The applicants were then asked to cough up Rs 2 to Rs 5 lakh for the ETA. However, some of the applicants grew suspicious and contacted the Canada embassy. "The embassy told them that Indians are not eligible to travel to Canada on ETA. The applicants realized that they have been duped," Chauhan added.

The victims approached the cops who began investigations and raided Mahesh's travel agency. Interrogation of Mahesh revealed that Sharma used to supply the ETA stickers. "So far, 150 persons have been duped by the accused but many more file complaint in future. We will now track down Sharma who supplied fake ETA stickers," Chauhan said.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/vadodara/gujarat-special-operations-group-busts-fake-visa-racket-arrest-two/articleshow/68603326.cms>