

Indian states move to organise labour supply

Delegations from Uttar Pradesh, Telangana meet employers in UAE

Published: 17:24 February 21, 2016
Shafaat Shahbandari, Staff Reporter

Dubai: Governments of two major Indian states have moved to protect blue collar workers from exploitation by recruitment agents, officials said.

Two delegations led by ministers of Uttar Pradesh and Telangana states are here for employers and UAE officials to ascertain ways of creating a safe migration system.

Around 60,000 Indians enter the UAE job market every year, most of whom are recruited through agents to work as blue collar workers. In many cases, these workers are charged exorbitant fees by the agents and they end up in debt, which has forced the governments of the two states in India to take action.

“People from our state are coming here in large numbers to work as blue collar workers. We have seen that agents exploit these people, so we are trying to create a structure where they can be protected from these agents who charge a lot of money for facilitating visas. Most of these poor people who migrate for work take loans to pay the charges for visa and travel, so our basic idea is to save them from the agent system,” said Naini Narsimha, minister for home and labour in the state of Telangana.

Speaking to *Gulf News* ahead of a meeting with employers and other officials at the Consulate General of India, he added: “This is a state government welfare measure. We are basically here to provide safe and legal migration. But we are also willing to train them on the skills required to work in the UAE as well as making them aware about the rules and regulations of the place where they will be working. Also, we will make them aware of their rights and privileges so that nobody exploits them.”

Around 800,000 Indians migrated to the Middle East for jobs in the last three years, out of whom 200,000 were from Uttar Pradesh.

“When we saw that a huge number of people from our state are moving out for work, we decided to develop a proper structure that facilitates their movement in a legal and safe environment,” said Prof Abhishek Mishra, UP Minister of Vocational Education and Skill Development.

The first step in this regard was to create a dedicated department for Non-Resident Indians (NRI).

“We are one of the few states to have a dedicated NRI department, a migration resource centre as well as a recruitment agency licence. So we are willing to facilitate recruitment apart from developing the skills of people. This will help both the employers in the UAE and other GCC states as well as our young men and women who are willing to migrate for work,” he added.

The minister said that the delegation is in the UAE to meet employers and ascertain the demand and see what sort of skills are required so that the manpower can be trained accordingly and their employment is facilitated through proper channels and in a secure environment.

“So, we are doing three things at a time, which is to train them, help them find the right jobs and then facilitate their migration. Currently what happens is that people have to incur huge amounts of debt to get their visas, which they pay to the agents and in many cases people are defrauded. Through this system we will get rid of this issue of fraud and people won't have to get loans to pay for their visas,” he said.

He added: “We are interacting with the industry here and making them aware of the structure we have built, where the employers also don't have to go through agents, who work on a commission model. If companies approach us with certain demands regarding standards of skills, then we are willing to train them to those standards as well.”

Speaking on the occasion, Anurag Bhushan, Consul General of India to Dubai, said: “We are working to harmonise the UAE system with the Indian system. We are working on ways to see how best we can fill the skill gap and create a market information system. We are also having discussions with the local government about the pay disparity and other related issues.”

The delegations have signed an MoU with Indian Business and Professional Council Dubai and ITec in Sharjah.