

48 migrant workers rescued from Berhampur

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Berhampur: Altogether 48 brick-kiln workers and their families were rescued by the district administration from the Berhampur railway station on Monday. Arrangements are being made to send them back to their native village near Khaprakhol in Bolangir district with their wages.

Sub-collector (Berhampur) Laxmi Kanta Sethi took immediate action when some mediapersons brought to his notice the condition of these labourers. Several people from the town later came forward to provide food to them. Sethi also asked the district labour officer to look into the problems of the labourers.

The labourers had been working in a brick-kiln near Ichhapur in Andhra Pradesh for the last six months. The kiln owner had stopped the work midway and asked them to go back to their respective villages after a hailstorm, triggered by cyclone Roanu, lashed the state on Saturday. He had, however, not paid them their wages. The makeshift shelter of the workers was destroyed in the storm. Following his orders, they had left for Berhampur. "We have been stranded at the Berhampur railway station without any money or food since Sunday night," said Kirtana Nayak, 45, one of the labourers.

"After several attempts, we managed to contact the brick-kiln owner of Ichhapur. He has cleared their dues amounting to Rs 22,000," said the district labour officer, Kalpana Mishra. "We are in close coordination to ensure their safe journey to their village in Balangir district," she added.

The brick kiln owner had not provided proper shelter, drinking water and food to them. The families lived in constant fear owing to the presence of snakes and other poisonous creatures, they said.

