

HYDERABAD

Abandoned by Saudi employer, workers from TS struggle for food, water



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Yet another traumatic story of dinar dreams turning sour came to light on Thursday as 13 men from Telangana were abandoned by their employers leaving them without food and water in Saudi Arabia.

Along with 16 others from Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, they were working with a private company as labourers in Riyadh. One of them, Chandrashekhar of Jagityal district, went there two years ago.

These unskilled workers -most of them dropped out of schools- were told by the brokers that they can return home after two years. "We completed two years and wanted to go home for which the company didn't agree. We petitioned the labour department here," Chandrashekhar explained through an overseas telephone call.

Apparently annoyed over the petition, the company didn't provide them any work for past two months. A fortnight ago, the company manager Mishri said they were being shifted to another labourer camp.

"We're not sure which area is this but locals said it is Alfansia close to Quwait border. They dumped 29 of us in four rooms and left," said Chandrashekhar. The climate was too hot and frequent dust storm made the lives of these abandoned workers even more miserable. "We're begging locals here for food. Even they are driving us away. For past three days, we're consuming water available in the bathroom," another worker said.

Chandrashekhar and other workers said a person called Jaleel claiming to be representative of Indian Government had approached them a week ago. "He gave us groceries which lasted for three days. He is inaccessible now and switched off his mobile phone," they said.

All of them are pleading with Telangana and the Central governments to help them return to India at the earliest. "We want to be with our families. Please help us," they said in one voice.

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