

# Business boom for UAE labour agents

SABY GANGULY

**BUSINESS** is booming for overseas-labour recruiting agencies as many employers in the UAE await replenishment of their manpower resources following the recent amnesty-related departures of illegal residents from the country.

"Our business is up by 100 per cent," said Mohammed Jindran, of Overseas Labour Supply, Sharjah, which specialises in recruiting manpower from the Indian sub-continent.

"Almost 80 per cent of this increase comes from the construction sector, the rest is accounted for by hotels and employers of technical staff," said Jindran.

Jindran added: "It appears there was surplus labour in the UAE, so it is unlikely that we will see as many workers coming in. But the market is now clean, there is no sign of illegal employment, and employers have no option but to employ legally. This spells good business for the agencies which recruit workers from other countries."

The exodus of illegal residents has created a temporary labour shortage, but relief has come "from the ministry of labour and social affairs which is now allowing as many visas as employers genuinely need for their projects."

Companies, which always employed legally, are overflowing with orders. "Supplies from firms that depended on illegal labour have been sharply hit by the shortage, so they aren't able to



Mohammed Jindran.

keep their production to previous levels. As a result, the others are now obtaining so much business that some are refusing orders," Jindran said, pointing at the furniture industry as an example.

A spokesman for another labour supply company said its business is "up by 30 per cent for the combined category of skilled and unskilled labour" and most of the increase comes from construction and warehousing sectors. "We are recruiting both locally and internationally. With the relaxation in rules for transfer of sponsorships, it has become easier to regularise employment of many who were earlier on the wrong side of law," a company spokesman said, requesting anonymity. "We are also recruiting from the sub-continent."

The construction industry had become a sanctuary for illegal labour in the UAE for many years in the past.