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Operators welcome move to regulate recruitment

BY MARY-JANE PEREIRA

THE Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs's recent move to tighten overseas labour recruitment procedures to improve the labour market has been widely welcomed by local operators.

Labour Minister Mater Humaid Al Tayer recently issued a ministerial decision announcing several restrictions on UAE agencies recruiting workers from abroad.

The new decision resumes licensing procedures for new recruitment agencies — which were suspended for more than a decade — provided the agencies meet a list of conditions in order to receive a licence to recruit workers from abroad.

"Apart from extracting a bank guarantee of Dhs100,000 from recruitment agencies — which will force only genuine overseas labour suppliers to thrive in the UAE labour market — the Ministry of Labour will issue licences only to nationals who will be directly involved in recruiting overseas manpower," said a ministry official.

"Moreover, according to the decision, those issued with such licences will not be allowed to collect a commission or recruitment fees from workers brought from outside the country," said the official.

Mohammed Imran Jindran, who operates a Sharjah-based company that has been supplying overseas workers since 1984, said the clampdown on recruitment agencies is good for the labour market.

"This is a timely and positive move as only genuine agents will survive, while fly-by-night operators who intend to only make profits will have no place in the



Mater Humaid Al Tayer

labour market.

"The bank guarantee and stringent steps taken to bring in more transparency in the activities of recruitment agencies is justified, as it is a move to seek a commitment from companies to undertake the responsibility of providing clients with quality workers, so that both companies and workers will not suffer," said Jindran.

"As far as we are concerned, workers are recruited only at a client's (local sponsor) request.

There is no question of collecting commission from workers as the client pays us for the services we provide and also bears the expenses incurred to bring their employees — such as airfare, accommodation, food, etc," he added.

Jindran said his company's main agents in Asia (India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Nepal) screen candidates, prior to recruitment to ensure that their qualifications and work experience are suitable meet the job requirements.

"We provide a six-month guarantee to our clients for

the workers that we supply," he added.

Ibrahim Sharif, who runs a Sharjah-based manpower consultancy firm, also welcomed the ministry's decision to improve the quality of workers in the UAE labour market.

"The new rules will not affect those who are serious about the business of recruiting quality workers. In fact, we will have a healthy competition with only genuine overseas recruitment agents remaining in the market," Sharif told *The Gulf Today*.

Sharif felt that the ministry's decision to ban agents from charging commission from overseas workers will benefit the new recruits.

"Earlier, workers desperate to take up jobs in the UAE had to pay a huge sum of money — ranging from Dhs7000 to Dhs10,000 — to unscrupulous recruitment agents. To raise this amount, these workers sold their family jewellery, property and other assets back home, only to end up here with low salaries and no accommodation," he said.

"Workers are forced to stay here, despite these conditions, as they have to pay off loans back home and send money to support their families.

"Therefore, the process of recruiting unwanted workers — not suitable for the jobs available — goes on and on; it's a chain reaction, which badly affects the labour market here."

Ruth Fernandes from Dubai-based Lobo Management Services, said the new ministerial decision will not affect her company.

"We are only involved in recruiting white-collar workers, particularly for middle-management positions," she said.

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