

Tharoor urges Indian missions in Gulf to record workers' wage issues during COVID-19

Onmanorama Staff

JULY 22, 2020 01:36 PM IST

New Delhi: Lawmaker and former Union Minister of State for External Affairs Shashi Tharoor has urged the Indian missions in the Gulf countries to record wage grievances of Indian workers, who were forced to return home in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic. “This is vital in addressing the wage theft issue,” he opined while addressing an online panel discussion recently.

He promised to write to Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar to set up a platform at the Indian missions to record the workers' grievances, especially on the wage front.

Tharoor suggested that setting up of an escrow fund (a third-party fund) would help tackle the wage theft issue. “Employer can deposit wages for six months in this account when the country approves VISA for a worker. This fund can be utilised when the employer defaults on wage payment,” he said.

Tharoor said the pandemic outbreak has become an excuse for the employers in the Gulf to retrench migrant workers without clearing their unpaid wages and end of service benefits. “Considering the limitations of mission houses, countries of origin should put pressure on countries of destination to ensure justice for the migrant workers, and to fight against the wage theft, civil society organizations should take a lead in organizing trade unions,” he said.

Wage theft is the practice of failing to pay workers the legally entitled wages. It affects millions of Asian migrant workers.

Arab countries employ around 35 million migrant workers, out of which nearly 10 million are from India.

The panel discussion - Transitional Justice: Towards Building Back Better – was jointly organized by Manila-based Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA), Delhi-based Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT) and Beirut-based Regional Center for Refugees and Migrants (CCRM).

Advertisement

The comments posted here/below/in the given space are not on behalf of Onmanorama. The person posting the comment will be in sole ownership of its responsibility. According to the central government's IT rules, obscene or offensive statement made against a person, religion, community or nation is a punishable offense, and legal action would be taken against people who indulge in such activities.