

HYDERABAD

Migrant activists demand rollback of wage c

STAFF REPORTER

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The Emigrants Welfare Forum (EWF) has demanded that the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) immediately roll back the circulars on reduction of Minimum Referral wages for migrant workers in West Asian countries.

EWF president M. Bheem Reddy on Sunday said that a letter to MEA Minister S. Jaishankar was sent seeking a withdrawal of circulars which lowered the minimum wages for new migrant workers in West Asian countries such as Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and Arab Emirates. He said that as per the circulars, the new wages are \$200 per month for those working in Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and the UAE, \$245 for those working in Kuwait and \$250 in Saudi Arabia.

“The circulars which have fixed the new minimum referral wage will result in a reduction of at least 30% depending on where the workers go. Previously, there was a provision for food allowances. The circulars have not specified anything in connection with the wages that migrant workers used to get. What is more worrying is that Qatar had fixed a minimum wage of 1,000 Riyals for workers. This will have an adverse effect on Indian workers,” Reddy said.

Mr Reddy claimed that several workers have been affected by the revised wages. “There were dozens of workers which were hired by a company in the hospitality sector in Abu Dhabi. They were recruited at a minimum wage of AED 950 and given food allowance. The company is now unwilling to pay that amount and wants employees to work at reduced wages. There is a need to withdraw these circulars at the earliest and help migrants who are already struggling,” he said.

Mr Reddy has filed a Right to Information request seeking to know whether West Asian countries have requested the Indian government to revise Minimum Referral Wages. Further, he also sought to know whether recruitment agencies have requested the MEA to revise these wages.

In the recent past, NRI Affairs Minister K.T. Rama Rao tweeted to Minister Jaishankar expressing concern over reduced wages and urged him to protect the interest of migrant workers.

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