

# **Qatar considers move to secure financial protection for labourers**

Qatar government is considering requiring private companies to provide monthly details of staff salaries

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- Published: 12:13 October 5, 2010

Manama: The Qatar government is considering a move to secure financial protection for labourers, by requiring private companies to provide monthly details of their salaries.

This would allow the authorities to make sure that workers are paid on time and that there are no unnecessary deductions or delays. It will also identify which workers have not been paid.

It has been suggested that companies, which are unable to transfer salaries to banks directly, should record the details of cash salary payments on discs and send them to the ministry, which already has a comprehensive database about commercial establishments in the country, covered by the labour law.

The database includes details about the workforce of each company, and by tallying the monthly salary payment details, the ministry will immediately know if all the workers of a company have been paid or not.

"We will be able to analyse salary payment details in no time since everything will be computerised," a senior ministry official, was quoted by Qatari daily The Peninsula as saying, on Tuesday.

The ministry is considering introducing an awareness campaign to encourage private sector companies to pay their workers through banks. For this purpose, it held a meeting with bank senior representatives recently.

However, critics of the plan say they have doubts about the willingness of banks to open individual accounts for lowly-paid workers.

"Nearly all the banks have minimum salary requirements for opening accounts and these limits run into a few thousands of riyals, while a lowly-paid worker's monthly wage should not be more than QR800 (Dh807.07) on average. So we don't think banks would welcome such a move," a critic said.

"And even if banks agree to open mass accounts for these workers, cash withdrawals using ATMs could be a problem since at the start of every month, ATMs will have long queues of workers in front of them."

According to the critic, the best solution is for companies to link their human resource departments with the e-government system, so they can easily send salary payment details each month. Private companies already have e-cards through which they apply for work visas and exit permits for their employees.

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