

Qatar to get tougher with abuses of the labour law

Inspectors will tour company premises and labour accommodations to check whether they comply with the provisions of the labour law

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Qatar's labour ministry is set to launch a massive crackdown on companies not complying with the provisions of the labour law, local media reported.

Inspectors will tour company premises and labour accommodations to check whether they comply with the provisions of the labour law. The campaign follows the stringent regulations issued by the ministry recently on the recruitment of foreign workers.

Inspections will focus on vocational health and safety, the payment of salaries and the issue of runaway workers, Qatari daily The Peninsula said.

Under the new regulations, companies applying for work visas are required to provide salary payment records for the previous three months endorsed by the ministry's inspection team.

Companies that fail to provide health care facilities and proper accommodation for their workers would face severe penalties.

Qatar requires companies to accommodate only four workers in a four by four metre room. Labour accommodations should also have clean potable water, proper sanitation and bathroom facilities.

Companies employing more than 500 workers should set up a clinic on their premises and appoint a qualified and experienced physician and a nurse. If the companies do not have their own clinics, they should provide medical insurance to the workers that allows them to get treatment at clinics or hospitals that offer round-the-clock emergency services.

The ministry has recently launched a pilot project asking companies to forward copies of their employees' salary transfers to banks to check whether they are paying their workers on time. The project allows the development of a comprehensive database.

Qatar hopes that new measures based on field studies would help address labour-related issues, mainly in the private sector.

The government set up a committee to look into the reasons and consequences of low-income absconding workers.

The committee recommended making recruitment rules for private companies stricter. Labour officials will start making visits to projects to assess whether the demand made by companies for workers is genuine and whether it really needs the number of work visas they had requested.

Qatar is witnessing an unprecedented boom in the construction sector, prompting companies to require more labourers, mainly from Asia.

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