

# Centralised link: Online Attestations for Indian labour contracts

New system to streamline verification of labour contract related papers for Indians in the UAE

- By Sharmila Dhal, Senior Reporter
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Dubai: A new web-based system to streamline attestations of papers related to labour contracts of Indian workers will be launched in the UAE in August, a top diplomat said.

M.K. Lokesh, Indian Ambassador to the UAE, said the new online system, which is currently in a trial phase, will enable all attestation services required by potential employers and workers to be centralised, linking the Indian missions with the UAE Ministry of Labour and the Protector General of Emigrants in India.

All Indian workers require emigration clearance by Indian authorities before they arrive in the UAE.

Under the existing system, he said, potential employers visit the Indian missions to get labour documents attested in order to secure an emigration clearance from the Indian authorities, but there is no way to tell whether there are any discrepancies or whether employers are honouring their commitments.

The new online system, which can be accessed by the labour authorities in both India and the UAE, seeks to check this discrepancy as it will provide a valuable record of not just recruitments, but also any violations that employers may commit. "The new system will streamline recruitment and benefit employers and workers," he said.

Attestations for consular services like birth, marriage, death and educational certificates will, however, remain unchanged and will require the physical presence of applicants.

## **In the pipeline**

Lokesh said an Indian Workers Resource Centre will be established by the end of the year to make ongoing community welfare measures more professional.

"We have already shortlisted some agencies who have experience in this field," he said.

He said a 24-hour helpline would be put in place for workers with other issues such as health insurance also being looked into.

Touching upon the status of various agreements between India and the UAE, he said a Memorandum of Understanding on manpower is set to be finalised with a delegation from India likely to visit the UAE this month.

He said the pact on the transfer of sentenced persons between the two countries has been finalised, but is yet to be signed.

"We hope to sign it soon and have invited the UAE Minister of Interior to visit India in this connection," he said.

Pointing out that the agreement on security cooperation has also been finalised, pending signatures, he said over 20 Indians from the UAE have been extradited/deported at the request of the Indian authorities in the last four years.

The number of requests pending is in single digits, he said.

On the trade and economic front, Lokesh said efforts will be to consolidate the strong relationship between the two countries and promote investments from the UAE in power, roads, communication and other key infrastructure areas in India.

"We require foreign investment and technology and that is where we want the UAE to assume a more important role, because it has the resources," he said.

The UAE has a current estimated investment of \$6 billion (Dh22 billion) in India, of which about \$1.5 billion (Dh5.5 billion) is foreign direct investment, he added.

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