

## **MEA, MSDE sign pact to skill Indians seeking overseas jobs**

NEW DELHI: Ministries of External Affairs, and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship formalised an agreement today to implement Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PKVY), a scheme designed to offer skill development to Indians seeking jobs overseas.

The MoU will institutionalise a framework to provide skill training to lakhs of Indians who go abroad to work every year.

On the occasion, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said Indian emigrant workers, especially those who went to the Gulf through recruitment agents, were exploited due to lack of requisite skills.

She termed the Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana as a "milestone" for Indian workforce seeking employment overseas, adding that acquiring skills raises employability and earning potential.

PKVY is a skill development initiative of the MEA in partnership with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), which is aimed at training and certification of Indian workforce in select sectors and job roles, in line with international standards, to facilitate overseas employment opportunities, a statement said.

"There are approximately 7-8 lakh emigrant workers going abroad every year. However, most going to the Gulf are not appropriately empowered in terms of rules, language, culture of that country or even the finesse that is required for a particular trade," said Additional Secretary, MEA, Dnyaneshwar M Mulay.

"PKVY is an important aspect of Ministry of External Affairs' mandate to train these workers as part of the five year planned programme. However, it has not been given effect and through this MoU, we will be implementing our commitment for the 12th Plan."

As part of the MoU, potential emigrant workers may avail work-related skill training under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) or any other similar government skill programme, which will adopt transnational standards.

The skill development ministry through the National Skill Development Corporation India (NSDC) proposes to establish customised International Skill Centres to operationalise this initiative.

"On 15 July, on the occasion of World Skills Day, we will establish training sectors for overseas skills for the first time in the country. We aim to open 50 such centres in the country this year," Secretary in the Ministry of Skills Development and Entrepreneurship Rohit Nandan said.

MEA's role will be to support Pre-Departure Orientation Training, which includes language and soft skills training modules. Training offered will be backed by an internationally recognised assessment and certification system.

Swaraj hoped that the collaboration will enhance overseas employment opportunities for Indian workers and boost Skill India, saying it is an important step towards the realisation of Prime Minister's vision of transforming India into the skill capital of the world.