...on (UCE)," she added.

poured resources into both O-Level and

Odongo, said examiners generally up-

Indian High Commission warns employers against passport confiscation

BY STEPHEN OTAGE

KAMPALA. The Indian High Commission in Kampala has warned that the Indian government will take firm action against Indian employers abroad who confiscate their workers' passports or deny them employment contracts.

Speaking at celebrations marking India's 77th Republic Day in Kampala last week, Indian High Commissioner to Uganda Upender Singh Rawat said New Delhi had instructed all its missions overseas to crack down on labour abuses involving Indian nationals.

Mr Rawat said while passport confiscation is most prevalent in the Middle East, where Indian employers operate in large numbers, the High Commission has also received reports of similar practices involving Indian employers in Uganda and Burundi.

"The Government of India has directed all missions abroad to take stringent action against Indian employers who indulge in contract substitution and confiscation of passports of Indian employees working overseas," Mr Rawat said. "Although these cases are more common in the Middle East, we are aware of incidents here in Uganda and Burundi where Indian nationals have had their passports withheld and have been denied employment contracts," he added.

The High Commissioner described passport confiscation as illegal and exploitative, adding that it exposes workers to abuse and restricts their freedom of movement. He further reminded Indian nationals working in Uganda that all foreign workers, including those on short-term visas, are required to possess valid work permits in compliance with Ugandan law.

Mr Rawat said the Indian government had recently reformed its overseas registration systems to better protect citizens working abroad, particularly during emergencies.

"All Indians working overseas can now register through their local Indian missions. This helps us assist them during emergencies and also informs policy initiatives back home," he said.

He added that the Indian mission in Kampala has enhanced its consular services to ease access to passport renewals and visa-related services. According to Mr Rawat, India's Ministry of External Affairs continues to upgrade digital platforms to improve efficiency and service delivery.

"Last year, we rolled out electronic passport issuance for new applicants as a pilot project. These system upgrades are aimed at making services more accessible and secure," he said.

Concerns over labour exploitation have also been raised in Kampala, with allegations that some foreign investors bring in nationals from their home countries and employ them as casual labourers under questionable conditions.

According to accounts circulating among workers and labour rights advocates, some employees have their passports confiscated immediately upon arrival at Entebbe airport, leaving them vulnerable to poor working conditions that fall short of international and local labour standards.



The Indian Ambassador to Uganda, Mr Uppender Singh (right), together with Henry Oryem Okello (left), State minister for Foreign Affairs, toast to the good relationship of the two countries during the 77th Indian Republic Day celebrations in Kampala last Wednesday. PHOTO/STEPHEN OTAGE

BACKGROUND

The developments come amid renewed calls for stronger enforcement of labour laws to protect both foreign and local workers from abuse. Uganda's Employment Act requires employers to issue written contracts and comply with minimum labour standards, including social security contributions and fair working conditions.

CamScanner