

Conservancy workers denied medical attention



None of them had been given Tetanus shots or proper gear to protect themselves while handling chemicals



Putting up with hardship:Conservancy workers from Hosur, Tuticorin, Tirunelveli and Krishnagiri who have been ushered in to clean the city are staying at the JJ stadium.- Photo: V. Ganesan

Conservancy workers from Hosur, Tuticorin, Tirunelveli and Krishnagiri who have been staying at the JJ stadium for the last week have alleged that they have been denied medical attention and transportation payments to enable them to get back to their hometowns.

Burns on hands

These workers are among the conservancy workers brought in from the surrounding districts to clean up the city. Showing burn marks all over his forearms, Arumugam, a worker from Krishnagiri, said that the flimsy gloves they had been provided did not cover their arms as a result of which, many of them suffered burns after handling bleaching powder.

“Many of us also have cut injuries after handling glass and bits of debris while helping to collect garbage,” he said. Tension prevailed in the camp on Saturday evening after a few workers claimed that they were asked to leave and go back to their hometowns without being given compensation for transportation.

Muniyappa, a worker from Hosur who has come along with fifty other conservancy workers said that none of them had been given Tetanus shots after they landed in the city for work.

The workers have been involved in garbage collection, sweeping streets and a host other jobs with regard to restoring hygiene and sanitation in the city.

Sujata Mody, President of the Pengal Thozhilalargal Sangam, said that activists working in the districts had been getting distress calls from the wives of the workers who were here, stating that their husbands had fallen ill.

“There is no proper record of their health condition. If these workers go back to their hometowns after contracting an illness from Chennai, their families too will be helpless,” she noted.

She further said that after the workers had asked for medical attention in the evening, they were simply given medicines and ointments for ailments which they did not have. “Only after the issue was raised did doctors arrive. Even then, the workers need to be examined properly and not just given unrelated medicines,” she said.

Compensation assured

A Corporation official who arrived at the camp spoke to the workers and said that they would be compensated for travel when they left in the following days.

“It is the duty of the division or officials in each locality where these workers are sent, to provide them with safety gear and they have been doing that,” he said, when asked about the inadequate safety gear that the workers complained of.

Sulif Damodaren, head of the Louie Conservancy workers Association from Kanyakumari, said that the provision of safety gear and TT shots could be done at a central point for all the workers.

Workers allege that they have been denied medical attention and travel compensation to enable them get back home

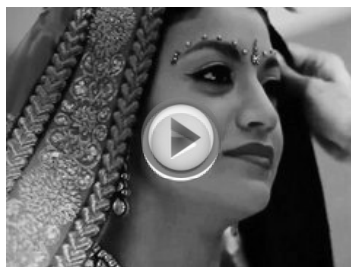
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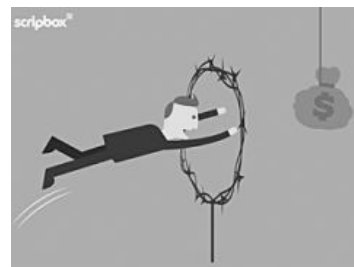
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