


No work, no cash, daily wagers feel the pinch

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A man exults after getting new 2,000 currency notes at a bank in Bengaluru on Saturday. Banks are working on the weekend to cater to the rush | Nagaraja Gadekal

BENGALURU: The going has been tough for thousands of daily wage workers in the city. They are either not getting work nor being paid for their work due to the shortage of currency. Among those struggling are electricians, plumbers, painters, construction workers, helpers and every other blue-collar job holder that one can imagine. Worse off are people who do not have a bank account or government ID proof to exchange notes and are miles away from their native village where families are waiting for cash.

Shivaraj from MS Palya in Vidyaranyapura, is a private construction contractor. Standing in a queue of a private bank ATM in Sahakaranagar, he told Express, “I pay salary to my workers every Saturday and it comes to around Rs 50,000. The bank is giving only 10,000. If I delay in giving salary they won’t come to work from next week. I am struggling to get money.”

Elumalai, a daily wage worker who accompanied Shivaraj, said he has no bank account and has just Rs 400 with him. “I can survive with this money in Bagalkote for four days but can’t survive in this big city. Also, there is uncertainty due to the delay from employers in paying my salary,” he said.

Yallappa M Chalawadi works as a helper in Vijayapura’s Muddebihal taluk. He has five daughters, aged between 14 and 6, one of whom is admitted in Bowring Hospital and requires blood transfusion frequently. “I get Rs 200 every day in Vijayapura. Here I am required to pay Rs 300 for every unit of platelets. The hospital asks for change. I don’t know how to get change.”

Srinivasa works as a mason and has traded his Rs 1,000 notes for Rs 800 since he has no bank account. “Nobody is accepting Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes. So I traded it for Rs 800. At least I have some money now,” he said.

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