

NRIs from Kerala to get identity cards, welfare scheme

A host of programmes are being worked out for non-resident Indians (NRIs) from Kerala, including a welfare scheme and issuing of identity cards, Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan told the state assembly Monday.

These measures would be implemented by Roots Norka, a state-owned organisation that looks after the welfare of non-resident Keralites (NRKs).

'To begin with, we will issue all NRKs in Malappuram district an identity card, which will also be an insurance and discount card. Once we complete this in Malappuram, it will be extended to all other districts in a phased manner,' Achuthanandan said in reply to a question raised by four treasury bench legislators.

According to studies, two million Malayalis are settled abroad, with close to 90 percent working in various Middle East countries.

Manjalankulam Ali, a ruling front legislator and director of Roots Norka, told IANS that the new welfare scheme bill would be ready in the coming few days and would be presented in the assembly.

'The identity card would be first distributed in my constituency Mankada in Malappuram district on July 19 and it would then be given out in other districts. By the year-end we will know the exact number of NRKs,' he said.

'This card will also act as an insurance card, where in the case of accident or death of an NRK, the beneficiary will get Rs.100,000. And this card can also be used as a discount card at select shops in the state,' Ali added.

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