

PATHUM THANI : The lives of Burmese workers living in Sam Khok district have been turned upside down after their factory was closed due to the flooding.

One 20-year-old Burmese labourer, Oor, who came to work in Thailand earlier this year, says lack of cash may force him to look elsewhere for work.

"My friends and I are very worried," said Oor, adding he cannot afford to wait an estimated two months for the car component factory to reopen.

He said he and his friends are burdened with monthly expenses and debts such as paying off the brokers who brought them to work in Thailand.

"We don't know what to do. We can't go back to Burma," Oor said.

He said he plans to search for a new job in Samut Sakhon even though he is supposed to stay in Sam Khok until his status has been registered.

Oor said he cannot simply wait for donated relief supplies for flood victims.

He needs money and the only way out that he can see is to take a risk by seeking jobs elsewhere.

However, workers who have already been given legal labour status are facing fewer problems.

They can travel away from areas they work in, return to Burma and come back to Thailand again.

Than Than Sint, a 34-year-old worker, said she and her husband will wait out the floods by returning home for the first time in 12 years.

"I will visit my mother and our son," she said. "We haven't seen him in all that time."

Meanwhile, almost half the migrant workers returning to their hometowns in Nakhon Ratchasima from flooded central provinces are seeking jobs there.

Anchali Sinthu, head of the provincial employment office, said 71 flood-affected workers had registered with the office to receive unemployment benefits.

Most of them worked in electronics and auto factories and about 30 of them have said that instead of returning to the factories when the floods subside, they would rather try and get a job locally, she said.

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