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Russia Boosts Work Permits for Indian and Bangladeshi Workers in 2025

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Alexander Demyanchuk / TASS

Russia ramped up its issuance of work permits to foreign nationals in 2025, especially for citizens of India and Bangladesh, official data showed, as employers sought to offset acute labor shortages caused by the war in Ukraine.

Russian authorities issued 56,500 work permits to Indian citizens last year, up from 36,200 in 2024, according to Interior Ministry statistics cited by the exiled media outlet Vyorstka.

Permits granted to workers from Bangladesh more than tripled to 9,300 from 2,800 a year earlier.

Both figures were the highest since at least 2017.

Work permits issued to citizens of several other countries also rose sharply.

The number granted to Turkmen nationals increased more than 2.5 times to 25,000, while permits for Uzbek citizens rose fivefold to 2,300 and permits issued to Tajik citizens nearly

tripled to 263.

China remained the largest single source of foreign labor, with permits issued to Chinese citizens rising by about 50% to 92,000.

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In total, Russia issued about 240,000 work permits to foreigners in 2025, up nearly 42% from the previous year and the highest level since at least 2017, the data showed.

The government plans to attract even more foreign workers this year, focusing on migrants from India, China, Malaysia, Bangladesh and African countries.

The Labor Ministry has proposed setting the 2026 quota for foreign workers at 279,000 people, about 20% higher than in 2025.

About 92% of the quota would be allocated to skilled workers needed for industrial enterprises and large-scale infrastructure projects, the ministry said.

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The remaining slots would go to unskilled laborers working in difficult conditions, as well as other occupations such as veterinary technicians and animal care staff.

The data comes as Russia continues to grapple with a significant labor shortage.

Russia's jobless rate fell to 2.1% in November last year, according to official statistics.

The Higher School of Economics estimates the Russian economy is short about 2.6 million workers, with the labor deficit expected to exceed 3 million by 2030.

The shortfall has largely been driven by the war in Ukraine, which has mobilized hundreds of thousands of working-age men and sparked a mass exodus of Kremlin critics and army deserters.

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