

Hard Times in Tajikistan

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One of the most visible effects of depression in Tajikistan is the sight of men hanging around in groups, hoping someone will take them on for a day's work.

Many of them used to have decent-paying work in Russia, but economic crisis there has led to job cuts and forced them to return home.

The "mardikors" or day labourers gather at informal labour markets, but because they are part of the grey economy they are vulnerable to being cheated by employers.

The city authorities in the capital Dushanbe want to create regulated job markets for the mardikors where there would be some measure of protection for them.

Anticipating the migrants' return, the national government has created over 35,000 jobs this year. But surprisingly, less than half have been filled, because job-hunters feel the wages on offer are not enough to make ends meet. is not to offer them better men gather hanging around.

Women in search of work are even worse off, as it is not considered right for them to stand around in the street asking for a job.

Many people feel it is the government's job to create new workplaces, but this is no longer the Soviet Union, and the best the authorities can do may be to facilitate the setting up of small businesses.

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