

## Jordan, Scotland, Bhutan beckon Indian BPOs

Anjali Prayag

Bangalore, June 16

Countries such as Bhutan, Jordan and Scotland could turn out to be the new BPO destinations as wage arbitrage, geo-political risk and high attrition levels are emerging as barriers in development of the industry in India.

While the Philippines and Brazil have already surfaced as alternatives to India, more countries are now joining the bandwagon, including Bhutan, Jordan and Scotland, projecting themselves as locations of choice for contact centres for Indian companies looking for risk-free, nearshoring options for the European, African and West Asian regions.

### 'IDEAL CHOICE'

Mr Samer I. Asfour, Commissioner for Investor Services and Development Zones Commission in Jordan, told *Business Line* that he had met Indian majors such as Zensar, Aegis, WNS and Hinduja Global Solutions for a possible foray into Jordan.

"Instead of managing the West Asian, African and European market from India, Jordan is the ideal choice because this is close to where business is happening."

Highlighting Jordan's people capability for the sector, he said that the country with over 92 per cent literacy, around 80 per cent are English speaking, 70 per cent university graduates and about 60 per cent of the population is below the age of 24.

BPOs such as Extensya, Aspire, CrystalCell have already employed around 4,000 Jor-

dans and the country is getting its infrastructure and talent ready for fresh ventures.

Jordan offers incentives such as up to 75 per cent income-tax and social service levy abatement for 10 years, training subsidies, customs and sales tax exemptions on fixed assets, and is even considering giving space free of cost for two years, according to Mr Asfour.

### SCOTTISH ATTRACTION

On the other hand, Scotland which already has several large BPOs including IBM, Sykes, John Lewis, Morgan Stanley and Indian companies such as Hero ITeS and Intelenet operating there, is leveraging its BPO industry experience to invite Indian BPOs to set up offshore or nearshore operations within the country.

The Scottish BPO sector experienced a growth of over 200 per cent in the last 10 years and currently employs close to one lakh people.

Mr Mark Hallan, India Country Manager, Scottish Development International, says that Scotland, apart from being 25-30 per cent cheaper than London, also offers a mature, established and a low risk option for Indian companies looking to service the UK, Europe, West Asia and Africa.

With its multilingual skills capability (some contact centres offer more than 20 languages), the country is the ideal location for Indian BPOs looking to service financial services and government and public sector outsourcing contracts in Europe and West Asia, he says.