

Employers want clarification on policy for foreign workers

PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) yesterday called on the government to clarify its policy on the renewal of permits for the existing foreign workers.

Its executive director Shamsuddin Bardan said of late the federation had received many complaints from members who were finding it difficult to renew the permits.

"Previously it was a breeze to renew the permits, but now it was very slow as

the immigration department took a longer time to process each application," he told Bernama, here.

He said this delay had caused much concern to companies as they were uncertain whether the permits would be renewed or not.

"We are tempted to interpret this delay as a deliberate attempt to force these workers to go back to their country of origin," Shamsuddin said.

"Whatever it was, it would be better for the government to be transparent, and reveal its real policy so that alternative arrangements could be made in order not to disrupt the companies' operations," he added.

He said another concern of the employers was that of late there had been an "unusual increase" in the number of failures among its foreign workers who took the skills test conducted by the Human Resources Ministry.

This test, he said, was mandatory for foreign workers who wished to extend their contract for the third year and beyond.

"We are not sure if this was another indirect attempt to reduce foreign labour," he added.

Shamsuddin said while the MEF fully supported the government's policy of reducing foreign labour, it nevertheless wanted clear-cut regulations so that it could not be manipulated.

On the compulsory

induction courses for new foreign workers, he said it would be cheaper for the government to conduct them when the workers arrived here rather than have it in their country of origin.

Moreover, he said it was not necessary to conduct such courses for workers from Indonesia or neighbouring South Thailand as the workers were familiar with the local culture and customs. — Bernama